A SERIES OF LETTERS.

THE SECOND EDITION.

A

SERIES

OF

LETTERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

CLARINDA CATHCART; ALICIA MONTAGUE;

AND THE COMEDY OF

SIR HARRY GAYLOVE.

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A

SERIES

OF

LETTERS.

LETTER XXVII.

YOU agree in thinking the works of Richardſon, and many other publications of the ſame kind, are of great advantage to young people, in giving them a more thorough knowledge of the world than they could poſ-

ſibly acquire by obſervation in the narrow circle which moſt individuals are confined to: At the ſame time, you think the number of female authors which they have been the means of producing can be no advantage to ſociety, but the reverſe. You will allow us, you ſay, to read at our leiſure as many of theſe publications as we pleaſe; but you are of the opinion, that women ought to confine themſelves to the care of their families, leaving it entirely to you lords of the creation to publiſh books of either entertainment or inſtruction.

With reſpect to amuſement, you are of the opinion, that the needle, the pencil, or a muſical inſtrument, are much more becoming in the hands of a female than the pen. You ſhould be very ill pleaſed, you think, if in bring-

ringing in company to dine with you, nſtead of finding your wife ready to eceive you, and to do you honour by er genteel and well-regulated œcono- ny, ſhe ſhould be cloſeted up, full of er own importance, writing precepts, r forming a cock and a bull ſtory of ruel parents, diſtreſſed damſels, re- laim'd rakes, &c. and on your deſi- ing her company, ſhe ſhould ſay,— Lord bleſs me, Mr B—, you have per- fectly unhinged my ideas. I proteſt I had rather have given fifty guineas as been thus diſturbed. I can't come to dinner (opening the door, and diſplay- ing the figure of a bedlamite); you ſee it is impoſſible; the cook will ſend it up. I believe I'm the moſt unfortu- nate woman on earth to be ſo teaz'd a- bout trifles. I tell you, Mr B—, I had rather not eat a morſel this month than be

be thus perpetually plagued. For God's ſake leave me.

You aſk me how I like ſuch a picture? adding, that if there muſt be female publications, they ought to be confined to Old Maids. Well, my friend, I have no objection. You may try and get us a patent; it is but juſt that we ſhould have ſome privileges to give us conſequence.

But to be ſerious; the picture you have drawn is truly ridiculous: at the ſame time give me leave to obſerve, that you would be equally plagued if you ſhould be unfortunate enough to marry a woman without common ſenſe, whether her hobby horſe be her pen, her book, her needle, her pencil, her harpſichord, or any other hobby which ſhe is pleaſed to ride, without ſkill to manage gracefully, or good ſenſe to know

now the propriety, of time and place
exhibit in.

It is certainly allowable for every
ne to have their favourite amuſement
purſuit; but people of ſolid under-
anding and good diſpoſitions will take
are that they ſhall not interfere with
he duty they owe their family, or the
tisfaction and agreeable intercourſe
hich ought to ſubſiſt amongſt friends
nd even common acquaintance. The
oing as we would be done by, is the
olden Rule which every body allows
ey ought to walk by; yet, I am ſor-
y to ſay, it is ſo little attended to, that
he very reverſe ſeems to be the gene-
l practice. Let us examine the dif-
erent families of this or any other great
etropolis, and obſerve from what va-
iety of cauſes there are ſo many of
hem, that a rational being, who loves

re-

regularity, cheerfulneſs, and good humour, would not chooſe to reſide in. We ſhall confine our obſervation to people in a middle ſtation, though, whether we aſcend or deſcend, I believe we ſhall find the general cauſes of uneaſineſs in moſt houſes are owing to a deficiency of common ſenſe in one or other of the heads of the family.

To give you at leaſt one ſpecimen of the ludicrous cauſes which often bring about ſerious effects, I ſhall give you a family anecdote, which perhaps may ſerve as a warning againſt your marrying a woman without knowing her diſpoſition, or whether ſhe is well grounded in thoſe liberal and humane principles which are ſimilar with your own; or in caſe you ſhould be unfortunately deceived, may prevent you from yielding in any point which would leſſen

your

your own character, or encourage your wife in any ridiculous weakneſs. At the ſame time, my friend, I ſtrongly adviſe you againſt being poſitive in things indifferent, or which can tend to no bad purpoſe; and ſtill leſs ſo where your wife can convince you of an error. It is always a ſign of good ſenſe to be open to conviction: But I am clear of the opinion, that neither huſband nor wife ſhould yield where a moral duty or conſcience forbid. I am alſo of opinion, that where two perſons are joined of oppoſite diſpoſitions, they ought to ſeparate whenever they find their miſtake, and not render themſelves and their children miſerable by jarring and diſcord, and preventing the advice and example of the beſt from having a proper effect.

Mr C——, of whole family I am

to

to give you an account, is a man of good principles, ſolid underſtanding, and a fine temper. He had lived a batchelor till the age of ſix and thirty. Indeed till then he did not think himſelf in ſuch circumſtances as to live in the ſtyle he wiſhed; and as he could never bear the thoughts of being a fortune hunter, he took ſome pains not to fix his affections till he could marry with ſome degree of propriety. At the time he paid his addreſſes to Miſs L—, he had newly acquired a place in the cuſtoms of four hundred a-year; he had beſides a ſmall property left by his father, who, in the old Scotch phraſe, was a cock-laird. The lady he made choice of was the daughter of a younger branch of an ancient family, more conſpicuous for their pride than either their wealth or their prudence. Mr C——, who had a high opinion of the female

female ſex in general, and who had been only lately introduced to Mr L—'s family, was greatly taken with his daughter, who was a lady very near his own age, and who, from her fine addreſs, and other accompliſhments which ſhe one day more particularly diſplayed, he could not help being very much ſurpriſed that ſhe had been permitted to remain ſo long ſingle. Underſtanding that her fortune could be but very ſmall, his natural generoſity of temper aſſiſted to inſpire him with love. Without much conſideration he paid his addreſſes to the lady—was accepted—and ſoon as the neceſſary preliminaries could be ſettled, was made happy in his accompliſhed bride. The ceremonious viſits being over, Mr C—— coming in one day from his morning walk, the following dialogue enſued.

My dear Fanny, I wiſh you had been with me this morning. I have had a moſt agreeable walk.

Bless me, Mr C——, would you have me to hack after you like a tradeſman's wife of a Sunday? I proteſt you aſtoniſh me. Were I to do ſuch a thing, I ſhould be aſhamed ever to appear again in a genteel circle. I aſſure you I have been very agreeably entertained ſince you went out. I have had a viſit from Lady Margaret R—— and her two lovely daughters: they go to the aſſembly to-morrow; and her Ladyſhip wiſhed of all things for me to be of her party. It was rather unfortunate my being engaged to head a party of my own; for Lady Margaret and both the young ladies ſeemed very much diſappointed.

THE diſappointment, replied Mr C——, need not be very great, as I ſuppoſe you'll meet in the ball-room.

You are quite ignorant, Mr C——, of theſe matters. Don't you know that a lady's conſequence is conſidered according as her party or train is more or leſs conſpicuous?

Mr C— (*laughing.*) WELL, my dear, I'll anſwer for it your train ſhall be as conſpicuous as the firſt ducheſs's in the kingdom (alluding to the train of her gown); and as to your party, if youth and beauty will make it conſpicuous, I am perſuaded your conſequence will be equalled by few.

As how, Mr C—? What do you mean?

Mr C—. WHY, my dear, you are to have Miſs T— in your party. I met her mother this morning, who told me ſhe intended to wait on you, to aſk if you was going to the aſſembly, that you might take her daughter under your protection. I told her you was; and that I was certain it would make you very happy to have her under your wing.

Mrs C—. GOOD GOD! Mr C—, are you ſerious? Do you think that I would take in my company the daughter of a tradeſman? Believe me, I'd rather never go to an aſſembly in my life.

Mr C—. I hope, my dear, you are not ſerious. If you are, I ſhall have a very bad opinion of your underſtanding. Miſs T—'s father is a man who has

has got a liberal education; had ſuch a patrimony as might have bred him to law, phyſic, or purchaſed him a commiſſion in the army; but after conſidering deliberately how he might be moſt uſeful to his country, his family, and friends, and how he might enjoy moſt comfort himſelf—he entered into partnerſhip with a manufacturer, and through his diligence and attention, with the manners of a gentleman, he has ſucceeded beyond his moſt ſanguine expectation. It is not the buſineſs or profeſſion which a man is bred to which conſtitutes him a gentleman: it is liberal ſentiments, with a mind above doing a mean action. Gentle in his manners, eaſy of acceſs, ready to promote the pleaſure and happineſs of every individual as far as lies in his power. And in this light Mr T—is a gentleman in the true ſenſe of the word.

And in fact he is of more uſe to his king and country than any landed gentleman in the kingdom. If his daughter is not intitled to go to an aſſembly, a moſt accompliſhed beautiful young girl, I don't know who is. Beſides, in my opinion, although her father were as illiterate as he is the reverſe, by having beſtowed ſo liberal an education on his daughter, the young lady is intitled to every piece of reſpect in her own right; a right greatly preferable to hereditary honours, which can never by ſenſible people be conſidered with any degree of reſpect unleſs joined to perſonal merit.

Mrs C—. I have not heard a word you have been ſaying, I am ſo terrified that this woman ſhould take it into her head to call. But (*ringing the bell*), John,

John, if Mrs T— calls, I'm not at home.

Mr C.—(*a good deal fretted.*) My dear, you diſtreſs me exceedingly; yet I cannot allow myſelf to believe you in earneſt. Pray, hear me patiently. Mrs T— won't be here; I aſſured her you was going to the aſſembly, and anſwered for your readineſs to oblige her; at the ſame time promiſed that you would write her a card.

Mrs C— Mr C—, it was the moſt ridiculous thing in the world for you to make ſuch a promiſe; for, poſitively, Miſs T— ſhall not go in my company to the aſſembly.

Mr C— (*a little heated.*) And, pray, Madam, what do you intend to do? what apology

apology do you mean to make? do you intend to affront your huſband?

Mrs C— You affront me, Mr C—, in ſuppoſing I would keep ſuch company. When you firſt paid your addreſſes, I told both Mr and Mrs L— that I was afraid your connections and mine would not ſuit: but they perſuaded me that you was in a very genteel line; and that if you had any low acquaintance or connections, you would very ſoon drop them when you ſaw they were diſagreeable to me. Indeed they adviſed me to ſhow my diſlike to them by degrees; but they never could have imagined that you could propoſe my uſhering in a tradeſman's daughter into a genteel aſſembly. In my opinion, Mrs T— had better teach her daughter to go to market and ſell their linen,

than

than pretend to introduce her into high life.

Mr C—. You amaze me, Fanny. You are not the woman I took you for. I feel myſelf ridiculouſly diſtreſſed. Is it poſſible that your father and mother could ſuppoſe that I would drop my acquaintance? No, Madam. I have no acquaintance or connection of whom I have any reaſon to be aſhamed, unleſs by your conduct I am obliged to conſider you an exception.

Mrs C—. Aſhamed of me, Sir!

Mr C—. (*taking her hand.*) My dear life, I beſeech you conſider. I aſk you pardon for ſpeaking too harſhly.

Mrs C—. Indeed, Mr C—, you uſe me

me exceedingly ill. It would be very extraordinary if I'm not to have the liberty of chooſing my own company, eſpecially to a public aſſembly.

Mr C—. Pray, my dear, will you hear me patiently? A public aſſembly is a place where neither the rank, riches, nor moral character of a perſon can be conſidered with reſpect to their admittance. If tickets are to be bought, every body is intitled to purchaſe; at the ſame time, no perſon would chooſe to go, unleſs they could in ſome reſpect be on an equality with the company in point of appearance. If they are by ſubſcription, as in our aſſemblies and concerts, the ſubſcribers have full power to diſpoſe of their tickets, or allow them to be transferred as they pleaſe. You ſee Miſs T— has got a ticket; therefore is conſidered a fit perſon for going.

And

And to whom could ſhe apply ſo naturally to accompany as the wife of her friend and relation?

Mrs C—. THE intention of a ſubſcription aſſembly is to prevent the admittance of ſuch people.

Mr C—. The more is the pity.

Mrs C—. It does not ſignify, Mr C—, I poſitively will not take Miſs T— in my company.

Mr C—. Pray, Madam, what apology do you mean to make?

Mrs C—. Since there muſt be an apology, I'll ſend her word that I have altered my mind, and am not going to the aſſembly.

Mr

Mr C—. And ſo you are not to go?

Mrs C—. I cannot ſay I ſhall carry it that far neither.

Mr C—. You mean to add a falſehood to folly. Indeed, Fanny, you diſtreſs me exceedingly. I was always of opinion that a man ſhould yield to his wife in every point that is not materially hurtful to his honour or credit. This, in itſelf, may appear a very trifling affair; and yet, I proteſt, I do not know how to extricate myſelf without expoſing you to ridicule and well deſerved cenſure. Beſides—

Mrs C— (*interrupting him.*) PRAY, Mr C—, do not give yourſelf any concern about that; for I declare the ridicule or cenſure of ſuch ſort of people

will not give me a moment's uneaſineſs.

Mr C—. MADAM, you affront your huſband, by treating either his relations or acquaintance with diſreſpect.

Mrs C—. YOU affront your wife, Sir, by offering to palm upon her ſuch company.

Mr C—. I ſhall loſe patience.

(*Enter Mrs* L—.)

Mr C—. I am exceedingly happy to ſee you, Madam. You have come quite *à propos* to aſſiſt me in bringing your daughter to reaſon. Do you know we have almoſt quarrelled?

Mrs C—. Nay, we have downrightly quarrelled, Mr C—.

HERE the lady gives her mother an account of the indignity offered by her huſband, and aggravated by a behaviour ſhe little expected.

Mrs L—, who coloured at the bare mentioning Miſs T— accompanying her daughter to the aſſembly, endeavoured to moderate her anger, and by cool reaſoning convince Mr C— of the impropriety of Mrs C— admitting Miſs T— into her party; aſſuring him, that if ſuch things were allowed, there would be an end of all diſtinction of ranks.

MR C— in his turn began to reaſon; but the two ladies ſpeaking at once, and raiſing their voices, knocked every argument in the head before it was half uttered. He therefore waited (I ſhall not ſay patiently) till they were in ſome degree

degree exhauſted. He then ventured to aſk, whether they did not think there was a much greater diſtinction of rank betwixt the Dutcheſs of G—, or even Lady Margaret R—, and his wife, than there was betwixt his wife and Miſs T—? and that both the Dutcheſs and Lady Margaret had condeſcended to admit Mrs C— into their party.

Lord have mercy upon me! ſaid Mrs L—. Mr C—, you are certainly quite ignorant of my daughter's connections. Do you know ſhe is very nearly related to the G——n family by her father; and I can aſſure you, Sir John B——, who was my mother's grandfather, is a much older ſtanding family than the Duke's. I muſt have Mr L— ſhow you the trees of our family. I'm obliged to you, Madam, replied Mr C—; but you muſt conſi-

der that your daughter is now become one of my family; and I do not know if there is a Duke, or even a knight, in the hundred degree of my kindred. So much the more pity, Mr C—. I'm ſorry for it; ſo much the more pity: but ſince this is the caſe, you ought to be proud of marrying into a family like ours; conſequently avoid ſuch company as may caſt a reflection on your wife on account of her choice. If you act prudently, Mr C—, out of reſpect to my daughter, perhaps you may be conſidered as one of us. Here Mr C— could not help giving Mrs L— a look of contempt; which Mrs C— obſerving, declared ſhe believed it would not be in her power to give the neceſſary orders to her milliner, who ſhe expected every moment, ſhe found herſelf put ſo much out of humour: the conſequence of which would be, ſhe

muſt

muſt diſappoint her whole company for this young manufacturer.

Mr C—'s patience being almoſt exhauſted, thought it beſt to take his hat and walk out, leaving the mother and daughter to bewail their heavy misfortunes by themſelves. After conſidering what was moſt prudent to do, it appeared there was a neceſſity for him to inform Mr T—; but the expoſing his wife's folly, and the thoughts of hurting the pride of his female couſins, made him ſtill feel in a ridiculous diſtreſs; nor could he find reſolution to direct his ſteps to that quarter of the town where Mr T— lived. Paſſing by the houſe of Lady Margaret R—, a ſudden thought occurred to wait on her Ladyſhip, and aſk her opinion of the matter in diſpute; but being ſo much diſappointed in his reference to Mrs

L—, his reſolution was about to fail, when Lady Margaret obſerving him from the window, threw up the ſaſh, and deſired he would walk in. Without heſitating farther Mr C— readily complied; and after a few preliminary compliments, gave her Ladyſhip a full account of this ridiculous diſpute. During the detail, Lady Margaret, by the expreſſion of her countenance, and a few well-timed ejaculations, convinced Mr C— that he was ſpeaking to a reaſonable woman. Encouraged by this obſervation, he enlivened his recital by a few ſtrokes of humour, which diverted her Ladyſhip, at the ſame time that ſhe could not help in ſome degree feeling for his diſtreſs; naturally concluding, that though this fracas might be got over, it would not in all probability be the laſt. However, ſhe thought it beſt not to treat it altogether

as

as a ſerious matter. Obſerving at the ſame time, that great allowances ought to be made for the prejudice of education, ſhe prudently threw the whole blame on the mother, endeavouring as much as poſſible to exculpate the daughter. But, continued ſhe, Mr C—, we muſt take the advantage of Mrs C— having ſaid that ſhe does not think ſhe can go to the aſſembly. And if you'll take the trouble to call on Mrs T—, I'll write her a card, and aſk the favour of the young Lady to dine with us to-morrow, and accompany me to the aſſembly.

Mr C—, finding himſelf ſo agreeably extricated from this dilemma, extolled her Ladyſhip's goodneſs with all the warmth of an orator. Upon my word, Mr C—, returned Lady Margaret, you are paying me a great many

ny undeſerved compliments. This young Lady, in right of her father, in my opinion, is juſtly intitled to go to the firſt aſſembly in the kingdom. But ſuppoſing this not to be the caſe, I do not know any advantage which attends birth or fortune that is more agreeable, than having it in one's power to tranſplant from the field to the garden ſuch flowers as are either particularly beautiful to the eye, or promiſe to be of public utility.

I am much pleaſed, replied Mr C—, to hear your Ladyſhip's opinion on this ſubject; for although no perſon can have a higher reſpect for people of rank and fortune, when they are ſupercilious, proud, or arrogant, I cannot help, inſtead of reſpect, feeling a much greater degree of contempt of their underſtanding, than I would at a ſimilar

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inſtance of folly from thoſe who have not had an opportunity of acquiring thoſe liberal ſentiments which I look for from people of diſtinction. I cannot altogether agree with you, Mr C—, in this ſentiment, returned Lady Margaret; for, believe me, the nobility are as much neglected in their education, with reſpect to moral rectitude, as their inferiors. Inſtead of being early taught the abſurdity and evil tendency of pride, with all its branches of folly, they are led, both by precept and example, to think too highly of hereditary honour. Fortune, and indeed every external or internal advantage, they poſſeſs, without ever being taught to conſider they are no otherwiſe advantageous but as they tend to influence their conduct, in making them uſeful to ſociety, and rendering their virtues more conſpicuous. No doubt there

are

are exceptions both in high and low ſtations in life. I believe there are many who may be ſaid to poſſeſs ſuch a rich ſoil for common ſenſe, that without either care or cultivation, like genius, it will flouriſh under every diſadvantage. But this is but now and then to be met with. Without particular attention, the force of cuſtom and prejudice is generally in moſt people ſufficient to prevent the improvement of reaſon: and we ſee by daily experience, mankind of all ranks, and at all ages, gadding after any thing, or every thing, rather than what would conſtitute their real happineſs.

I ſtand corrected, replied Mr C—, and find I muſt impute the general errors of mankind to opinions imbibed in their youth; which either the confined buſtle of buſineſs, or ill-conducted plea-

pleaſures, prevent them having time to look into when arrived at years of diſcretion. Your Ladyſhip's ſentiments, continued he, being the reſult of reaſon, muſt refine every delicate feeling of your ſoul. Would to God their influence could extend from pole to pole! We ſhould then be happy as God and nature intended.

LADY Margaret ſmiling at his warmth of expreſſion, and obſerving Mr C— looking his watch, propoſed writing the card; which being finiſhed, Mr C—, after renewing his grateful acknowledgments, took his leave of her Ladyſhip, and hurried away to Mr T—, where he found the family ſitting down to dinner. Afraid of keeping Mrs C— waiting, he would not be prevailed on to partake, but preſenting the card, Mrs T— looked it over; then read

read it aloud. The young Lady's eyes ſparkled with pleaſure. Mr and Mrs T— expreſſed the ſenſe they had of the honour Lady Margaret did them; and ſuppoſing the obligation chiefly owing to Mrs C—, begged their grateful reſpects, and hoped Jane would have the pleaſure of attending her couſin another time.

Mr C—'s hurry was a ſufficient apology for his not ſeeming to obſerve what was ſaid. Like a good huſband, who wiſhes not to give the moſt trifling cauſe of complaint, he hurried along; yet did not reach home till a full half hour after the uſual time of dining.

Entering the parlour: my dear Fanny, I aſk your pardon. I am afraid I have kept you waiting. The Lady making

making no reply, Mr C— looking in her face, obſerved ſhe had been crying. God bleſs me, my dear creature, ſaid he (for he really loved her), has this fooliſh diſpute of ours occaſioned you to ſhed tears. I beſeech you think no more of it. Miſs T— goes to the aſſembly with another party. Dinner being ſerved up, little more was ſaid for the preſent. Mr C—, with kind looks and gentle entreaty, helped her to the niceſt bits; begged ſhe would eat away her indiſpoſition; afraid the ſervant would obſerve her in the ſullens. Indeed a diſeaſe of the mind, occaſioned by folly, is often more poignant than bodily diſtreſs; but in the preſent caſe, Mrs C— was perfectly at eaſe. Exulting in her own mind that ſhe had gained the victory, ſhe was now only afraid of too eaſily forgiving her huſband; and obſerving that he

was really diſtreſſed at her not eating, ſhe reſolved to torment him till he ſhould make proper conceſſions, and till ſhe could receive him into favour without deſcending from that dignity which ſhe wiſhed if poſſible to keep up as his ſuperior.

FROM the Lady having ſhed tears in the abſence of her huſband, one would be led to imagine ſhe was of a more ſoft diſpoſition than her behaviour during the quarrel might have led us to expect: but the occaſion was this— Mr C— had no ſooner gone out than the mother and the daughter entered into a warm diſpute; Mrs L— declaring ſhe had no hand in the marriage; that it was all her own doing; that Mr L— and her, from prudential reaſons, had indeed readily agreed to it; but that ſhe had no cauſe to upbraid them.

them; ſhe was arrived at an age when there was little probability of her being aſked by a man of family and fortune; and even in her youth, ſo far as ſhe knew, ſhe had never had an offer: It was therefore full time to accept the firſt, unleſs ſhe had intended to remain an old maid, and at her father's death depend on the bounty of her relations. As this was rather ſarcaſtically ſpoke, and as Mrs C— was already wrought up to a certain pitch bordering on rage, ſhe at once broke through all bounds; imputed her want of offers to the poverty of her parents; and treating her mother with the utmoſt diſreſpect, the old Lady loſt all patience; and upbraiding her with cruelty and ingratitude, left the houſe in a ſituation of mind in ſome degree to be pitied, notwithſtanding its being en-

tirely the conſequence of her own folly.

Mrs C— being then left to cool at her leiſure, was for ſome time incapable of reflection: But as nothing violent is of long continuance, ſhe ſoon began to conſider the bad conſequences that might reſult from her quarrelling with both her huſband and mother. She therefore prudently reſolved, when Mr C— returned, to endeavour to palliate her offence, by imputing it to a duty ſhe owed her mother; who ſhe was certain would never forgive her if ſhe complied with his requeſt; and at the ſame time, if ſhe found him obſtinate, ſhe reſolved to yield, and would only take care to pay the young Lady ſo little attention at the aſſembly, as would in all probability prevent her aſking to go a ſecond time in her party.

Conning

Conning over this important and political leſſon, the time paſſed tolerably till the clock ſtruck four; when—Gracious God! exclaimed this unfortunate fair, what is the meaning of this? traverſing the room in dreadful agitation. Pride, anger, reſentment, ſhame and fear, alternately attempted to ſhake her frame. Tears firſt came to her relief; when, O happy reverſe of fortune, Mr C— entered as before mentioned; and by his looks and kind attention proclaimed the Lady victorious. No ſooner did ſhe make this happy diſcovery, than ſhe reſolved, by affected gravity, to conceal her joy till her huſband ſhould make proper conceſſions. How long this would have laſted, or how far it might have carried her, I ſhall not pretend to ſay. Fortunately, immediately after dinner, the milliner was announced with a new aſſortment

of flowers and feathers. All the colours of the rain-bow were now diſplayed. Mrs C—, elevated with pleaſure, is thrown off her guard; aſks her huſband's opinion. And here, what all the rhetorick of a Sheridan, nor the argument of an Addiſon, could not have accompliſhed, was, by a happy arrangement of colours and a gentle blow of feathers, completed in an inſtant. All was harmony and love.

After the important conſultation was thus delightfully concluded, and tea over, this happy couple ſat down to a game at piquet. They had only played a few hands, when, by another reverſe of fortune, as Mr C— ſhuffled the cards, he aſked if ſhe could gueſs in whoſe party Miſs T— was to be at the aſſembly? Fretted at a ſubject being renewed which had given her ſo much

much vexation, ſhe anſwered, ſhe ſhould give herſelf no trouble to gueſs; and begged he would not name Miſs T— to her again; vowing ſhe ſhould always hate the ſight of her. I am ſorry to hear you ſay ſo, replied Mr C—; and at the ſame time think it neceſſary to inform you, that you will ſee her to-morrow at the aſſembly with Lady Margaret R——. Good God! (throwing down the cards) have you palmed her on Lady Margaret?

Mr C—, equally vexed and aſtoniſhed at his wife's behaviour, walked through the room without ſpeaking a word; while Mrs C— continued to vent her paſſion in expreſſions the moſt provoking, and diſcovering ſentiments, which threw ſuch a ſtriking light on her character, that Mr C— found himſelf quite diſguſted. Suppoſing his ſilence

lence to proceed from ſhame and vexation at having a ſecond time diſobliged her, and not doubting, from the good humour which he had ſhown ſince the morning's fracas, that he would again be all humble ſubmiſſion, ſhe reſolved to let him feel the weight of her diſpleaſure, and not be ſo haſty in condeſcending to forgive him.

Mr C—, finding it impoſſible to get in a word, loſt patience, and left the room. His diſtreſs was now become a ſerious matter of conſideration. He had married, as he imagined, an amiable woman, who was to be his friend and companion; who would leſſen his cares and heighten every joy: and now to be convinced at once of having got a vain, fooliſh, obſtinate being, without the leaſt ſhare of delicate ſenſibility, or that gentle ſweetneſs of

of diſpoſition ſo characteriſtic of a virtuous woman, diſtreſſed him beyond meaſure.

He revolved in his mind the difference of her behaviour before marriage, and could not reconcile to himſelf how it could be ſo ridiculouſly contraſted. The matter of fact was this: Mrs C—, when ſhe pleaſed, had all that winning ſoftneſs in appearance which he imagined ſhe had in reality; and during the courtſhip, which from the firſt introduction did not exceed a few weeks, he had no opportunity of ſeeing the only ſtriking traits in her character, viz. family pride, and a love of domineering over her inferiors.

RUMINATING a conſiderable time on how he ſhould act, and finding himſelf more and more diſguſted, he at laſt came

came to the reſolution of writing her a note, begging to know when ſhe would be at leiſure, as he had a propoſal to make on which depended their future happineſs; and that till ſhe was perfectly compoſed, he would not pretend to begin a ſubject which it was neceſſary for her to liſten to coolly. This note he carried himſelf; and laying it down on the table before her, retired immediately to his library till the lady ſhould think proper to ſummon him.

Mrs C— having no idea of a perſon writing to one in the ſame houſe, looked on the note with great contempt; but it immediately occurring to her it was intended as a piece of reſpect, and that he certainly meant, not only to make an apology, but perhaps to bribe her by ſome fine preſent to a thorough reconciliation, ſhe reſolved to make her own

own terms. Ringing the bell, ſhe deſired the ſervant to let his maſter know ſhe wiſhed to ſee him. Putting on a look of haughtineſs on his entering the room, ſhe aſked what he meant by that piece of formality of writing her a card? Why, Madam, replied he, I imagined it explained its meaning—that I wiſh you to hear coolly what I intend to propoſe. And pray, Sir, what propoſal have you to make?

BEFORE I make any propoſal, Madam (ſitting down oppoſite to her), I think it firſt neceſſary to inform you, that I am diſappointed, moſt egregiouſly diſappointed. What do you mean? In what pray?—In finding, Madam, by dear-bought experience, that inſtead of having fixed my affections on a woman whoſe temper and diſpoſition is formed to make me happy,

happy, I have precipitately engaged myſelf to one, whoſe illiberal ſentiments, and what I conſider vulgar prejudices, muſt (were we to remain together) render us miſerable for life. (His looks, and the reſolution with which he ſpoke, awed her into ſilence.) I therefore, continued he, have to propoſe, that we ſhall mutually agree to ſeparate. Your fortune, which I have not received from your father, ſhall never be demanded; the half of your jointure ſettled upon you ſhall be paid you annually; at my death you are intitled to the whole. Neither your friends nor you ſhall have it to ſay that I have acted ungenerouſly by you. Indeed it is but juſt that I ſhould pay for my folly, in marrying a woman whoſe diſpoſition I was ſo little acquainted with. He ſtopped, expecting a reply: but Mrs C—, ſtruck with his manner,

and more ſo by the propoſal, could not articulate a word.

SEEING and feeling for her diſtreſs, he endeavoured to encourage her, by obſerving, that as ſhe had enjoyed happineſs in her father's houſe, he ſaw no reaſon why ſhe might not enjoy it again; aſſuring her, that ſhe might depend upon it that he would do juſtice to her character, by acknowledging, that nothing but a diſſimilarity of temper and opinion had occaſioned their ſeparation.

AGITATED by contending paſſions, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears. When ſomewhat relieved, ſhe ſobbed out, that he muſt think very little of the marriage-contract, to propoſe parting with her for a difference of opinion, or even what he might conſider a fooliſh diſ-

pute; and that if ſuch were generally to cauſe a ſeparation, ſhe believed few married couples would outlive the honey-moon: For her part, ſhe did not expect that they would always be of one opinion; but ſhe imagined, that he would have been ready to yield in any point in which ſhe had a better opportunity of knowing than he had; but that ſince ſhe found it otherwiſe, ſhe ſhould certainly think it her duty to give up the point, rather than expoſe herſelf or him to the cenſure of the world, or ſet an example which, if followed, would be ſo prejudicial to ſociety.

Mr C— anſwered, that nobody held the matrimonial vow more ſacred than he did; at the ſame time, he looked on love and harmony as ſo eſſential to conſtitute preſent and future happineſs, that

that he conſidered it as a duty that he owed both to himſelf and her to ſeparate, when there was no probability of their living happy together. As for the example being hurtful to ſociety he denied; the diſagreements and quarrels betwixt man and wife being the ultimate cauſe of many of the evils in life. He averred, that no married couple that were perpetually quarrelling, or even occaſionally, were proper to bring up children; and that where the heads of a family did not ſhow a proper example, nothing could be expected but diſobedience, irregularity, and confuſion: that differing in opinion with reſpect to taſte and many other things, if they did not occaſion bad humour or warm diſputes, could not be of any bad conſequence; but with reſpect to ſocial and moral virtues, if a huſband and wife were not of the ſame mind, one

or other, if not both, muſt be rendered unhappy.

Mrs C— replied, that ſhe did not think that their diſpute had any concern with the ſocial or moral virtues, but that perhaps ſhe was miſtaken; and offering him her hand, begged he would think no more of it.

Mr C— had not formed the reſolution of a ſeparation without experiencing a very great degree of pain; the more ſo as he had not, from the whole of her behaviour that day, the ſmalleſt reaſon to believe ſhe would yield any point her heart was ſet upon. He had therefore determined on the ſeparation. But to find her at once ſo complying, aſtoniſhed him exceedingly. He took her offered hand, which he preſſed to his lips, while his eyes gliſtened with

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a feeling of depreſſed joy. He knew not whether to conſtrue her yielding to affection, prudence, or both: but to whatever it was owing, he flattered himſelf ſhe would not again behave ſo ridiculouſly; and could not help feeling a degree of pleaſure he little expected; at the ſame time, as it did not appear to be the conſequence of conviction, it was leſſened by ſeeing her ſubmit like a child under the rod.

Would to God! (ſaid he), my dear Fanny, that I could convince you of your miſtake in thinking that our diſpute had no connection with the moral or ſocial virtues. The doing as we would be done by, is the Golden Rule on which hang all the virtues. When we are perpetually breaking through this, there is no ſaying how far we will go. It is true, that one may ſome-

times, in trifling occurrences, fall into this error without being aware; but when we deliberately break through this rule, and againſt every argument perſiſt in hurting the feelings of a perſon of merit, we certainly act in direct oppoſition to the leading principle of morality. Mr T— is a man of property, and carrying on a flouriſhing trade. Were he to loſe a few hundreds by any accident whatever, I believe it would give him very little concern; whereas an affront put upon his daughter, or any of his family, eſpecially by the wife of his relation and friend (I know by my own feelings), it would pain him beyond expreſſion; beſides, the conſequence muſt have put an end to our friendſhip, and that ſocial intercourſe which has ſubſiſted betwixt us ſince the days of our childhood; and I believe ſincerely has, in a great degree,

gree, conſtituted the happineſs of both.

But, Mr C—, do you pay no regard to cuſtom and faſhion?

Why, my dear, replied Mr C—, in the firſt place, I deny that it is the faſhion. People are grown much wiſer, and know their own intereſt better, than to deſpiſe the men who are the ſupport of the nation. It is by trade and commerce that our country is enriched; and to with-hold from thoſe the reward of their ingenuity and toil, is by no means the folly in general of the preſent age. But if it were, I would act in direct oppoſition to every cuſtom which encourages indolence, impoveriſhes our country, and obliges ſo many gentlemen of ſmall fortunes either to breed their ſons to what they conſider

der a genteel profeſſion, where thouſands of them half ſtarve, or ſend them out of the kingdom to ſpend the beſt part of their lives among ſtrangers, alienate their affections from their country and friends, and deprive themſelves of that heart-felt ſatisfaction which good minds muſt enjoy from ſeeing their children and connections flouriſhing around them.

Mrs C—, though ſhe could not altogether enter into theſe ſentiments, yet perceived a kind of glimmering of a new light; and as ſhe was now perfectly convinced that her huſband would never yield a point which he conſidered of ſuch importance, ſhe had prudence enough by her ſilence ſo far to aſſent to his opinions. Mrs C—'s education from her infancy had led her to pay a ſtrict obſervance to all the form and

and etiquette of ceremony. Before ſhe was ten years of age, ſhe knew perfectly the nice diſtinction of ranks, and could regulate her attention according to the birth and conſequence of her young viſitors. From the example of her mother, ſhe was occaſionally inſolent to her inferiors, haughty to her equals, and to her ſuperiors always obſequious, and the moſt cheerful and agreeable creature in the world. Her parents, although they could ill afford it, had ſpared no expence in giving her every branch of polite education; in which ſhe improved to their moſt ſanguine expectations: and indeed at the age of nineteen, ſhe was conſidered a moſt accompliſhed young Lady, with a fine perſon and a very ageeeable countenance; it was no wonder ſhe ſhould be a toaſt in the beau monde: yet with all theſe advantages Miſs L—

arrived

arrived at the age of five and thirty without receiving the ſerious addreſſes of any of her admirers. Mr C— was actually the firſt who propoſed marriage; and from prudential reaſons, as before obſerved, was condeſcendingly accepted of. With all her accompliſhments, Miſs L— had not a ſingle idea beyond cuſtom and faſhion. Her perpetual engagements prevented her from having time for reading. Acts of humanity, or even ſentiments of juſtice, ſhe was a perfect ſtranger to. To keep up a ſhow of gentility Mr L— was obliged every year to leſſen his capital; yet duns were perpetually at their gate. From childhood ſhe was taught to conſider cheating at cards as a jeſt; and to pay a bill without being repeatedly dunned ſhe could have no conception of. Falſehoods of various conſtructions had ſerved as neceſſary apologies

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for every breach of civility, kindneſs, charity, and indeed for the neglect of every duty, as occaſion required. Mrs C— was exactly ſuch a woman as Lord Cheſterfield ſeems to have conſidered the whole ſex. God forbid! I hope, my young friend, you are convinced of his error, and believe there are many women bred up with principles of honour, juſtice, and every amiable virtue. His lordſhip appears to have thought, that womens weakneſs, in mind as well as body, are conſtitutional. And no doubt thoſe maſculine virtues which depend on bodily ſtrength, ſuch as courage, reſolution, &c. are more conſpicuous in the men; though even in theſe, ſo far as I would account them virtues, I cannot help thinking the women have the advantage; ſuch as ſupporting the unavoidable evils of life with more fortitude

tude than the men. It is true, we have not the boldneſs of the lion to attack or defend in the field of battle; we have not the reſolution to ſtand in the face of cannons flying, or join in deſtroying our fellow-creatures: theſe, if they are virtues, are left to you unrivalled.

WOMEN are alſo, from the weakneſs of their conſtitutions, unfit for intenſe ſtudy and hard labour: but every virtue which tends to humaniſe the mind, every qualification which renders the two ſexes pleaſing and agreeable to one another; every ſentiment that reaſon can approve; the great God of nature appears to have beſtowed on each organs of ſenſe equally adapted for the purpoſe. How often they lie unimproved by the one, and utterly deſtroyed by the other, requires little penetration

netration to diſcern. Yes, my young friend, the barbarous and inhuman practice of war, one could ſcarcely conceive would enter into the heart of beings endowed with reaſon. What a ſhame is it that national diſputes are not ſettled by equity and juſtice! that the great governors of nations cannot agree with regard to their rights and property without the deciſion of the ſword! This appears to me ſo inconſiſtent with the dignity of man; ſo inconſiſtent with that wiſdom which enables the weak, through improved reaſon, to govern the ſtrong, which makes the ignorant ſubmit to their ſuperiors, that I confeſs I cannot think of it without the utmoſt horror and aſtoniſhment. But I know you'll adviſe me again to confine my pen to obſervations on common life.

To return, then, to Mr and Mrs

C—, of whom you probably think I had taken leave, allow me to obſerve, that had Mr C— been a man of a weak underſtanding, with a timid, ſervile, diſpoſition, Mrs C— would have made him a complete Jerry Sneak. Had he had a ſour, moroſe, poſitive, and bad diſpoſition, which is often the attendant of a weak mind, they probably would have quarrelled and agreed, agreed and quarrelled, to the end of their lives. Had he been a man of the world, he would have given himſelf little concern with either her or her company: a man immerſed in buſineſs, ſhe might have had the ſame liberty; a man of even good underſtanding, by a want of proper reſolution, would have been rendered unhappy for life. Had Mrs C-- been married to any one of theſe characters, ſhe would in all probability have continued a vain, ſelf-conceited,

ceited, extravagant, over-bearing, foolish woman; their children inheriting the diſpoſition of their parents, probably ſtriking out new paths, and improving their little minds to the utmoſt ſtretch of prejudice and folly. But Mrs C— had the good fortune to be united to a man, whoſe ſenſe, reſolution, and fine diſpoſition, brought about a reformation, which the diffidence and modeſt opinion he had of his own merit made him little expect.

SELF-INTEREST was undoubtedly the Lady's firſt motive for ſubmiſſion. She by no means would have wiſhed to return to her father, whoſe circumſtances were much on the decline; nor did ſhe think the half of her jointure by any means ſufficient to ſupport a perſon of her conſequence. Her pride alſo raiſed another argument in favour of ſubmiſſion;

miſſion; the thoughts of being conſidered to want charms to ſecure the affection of her huſband even for the honey-moon. All theſe conſiderations were ſufficient to ſhow the neceſſity of a reconciliation; but at the ſame time, as I before obſerved, her ſilence and attention to his arguments in favour of the moral and ſocial virtues, to which it is impoſſible for my pen to do juſtice, gave her a faint glimpſe of a new light, which the daily converſation and example of a man of principle and good ſenſe imperceptibly encreaſed, till ſhe actually ſaw ſo clearly as to look back upon her former ſelf with ſhame and deteſtation. And what is well worthy of obſervation, inſtead of being rigidly ſevere as formerly, in cenſuring the foibles of her acquaintance, ſhe now makes every poſſible allowance for their faults: Inſtead of looking

contempt

contempt on every perſon who cannot boaſt of their anceſtry, yet preſume to vie with her in appearance or addreſs, ſhe now, to all ranks, appears the woman of diſtinction, from the graceful eaſe, affability, and winning charms of her whole behaviour. Inſtead of haſty concluſions on public report, being zealous without judgment, violent in her diſputes, and peremptory in her deciſions; ſhe is now charitable in her conſtructions, ſlow in her concluſions, modeſt and diffident in all her opinions. In a word, ſhe is become a reaſonable woman.

At this day Mr and Mrs C— are the happieſt couple breathing; they eſteem, they love one another, with the moſt ardent affection. She acknowledges to her friends that Mr C— married her a mere child in every thing

but years. It is true, ſhe obſerves ſhe was miſtreſs of every polite branch of education, but that only ſerved to make her folly more conſpicuous.

In every exertion of her abilities, ſhe was governed by caprice or whim; affections ſhe had none. She declares, till after her reformation, ſhe never experienced a moment's real pleaſure.

The admiration beſtowed on a young beauty uſed to raiſe her envy to a painful degree; in conſequence of which ſhe never failed to pull her to pieces with all the ſeverity of ill-natured criticiſm. If any thing gave her the ſhadow of pleaſure, it was in finding a flaw either in the perſon, character, or birth of the beauty ſhe envied. She humorouſly acknowledges, that every avenue to the fine feelings of her

ſoul,

ſoul, was ſo blocked up with rubbiſh, that ſhe believes no perſon in the univerſe, Mr C— excepted, could have had patience to clear them.

THEY have now three children, a boy and two girls, who are, comparitively ſpeaking to the generality of young people, really models of perfection. You would be delighted to obſerve the love theſe children have for one another. If Mrs C— has occaſion to reprove any one of them, which is indeed but ſeldom, the other two, by their bluſhes, look equally concerned. Mrs C— having been ſo much neglected herſelf, watches over their young minds with the utmoſt attention. I will give you a little anecdote of Arabella, the youngeſt. However trifling it may appear, as it will ſhow the effect of an early attention

tention to the morals of children, I ſhall make no apology for making it the ſubject of my next. I have already far exceeded the bounds of a letter. For the preſent I therefore bid you adieu.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

ARABELLA came home from ſchool one day with her eyes red with crying. Dinner being immediately ſerved up, it was not obſerved till her Mama was helping her at table; however, ſhe did not ſeem to take any notice of it till ſhe ſaw the child attempting to eat, but could not ſwallow a bit. My dear Arabella, ſaid ſhe, what is the matter? Are you well enough? The little creature, ſpringing from her chair, ran to her mother, ſaying, O my dear Mama, don't be frightened. I am very well; 'tis almoſt nothing; but

I am ſo fooliſh. Pray allow me to go to my own chamber, and I'll tell you every thing when you have dined.

We ſhall wait, my dear, for your Mama, ſaid Mr C—; for I am ſure ſhe won't eat till ſhe knows what diſturbs you.

Mrs C— immediately riſing, led her out; Maſter Charles and Miſs C— looking ſo frightened, that a ſtranger would have imagined they had occaſioned her tears, and expected a ſevere whipping. A melancholy ſilence reigned for a few minutes, when Mrs C— returned with Arabella ſmiling in her hand. I have ſettled the matter, ſaid ſhe, which made my dear girl ſo uneaſy entirely to her ſatisfaction. Arabella, looking at her brother and ſiſter, who ſhe obſerved ſmiling through their tears,

tears, I am quite aſhamed, ſaid the pretty creature, at making every one ſo uneaſy from my being ſo fooliſh as to cry for nothing. Well, Arabella, ſaid Mr C—, let us forget it, and eat our dinner. Indeed his anxiety at ſeeing the child ſo agitated, had not made a leſs impreſſion on him than the reſt, it being a thing ſo unuſual.

DINNER over, and the ſervants withdrawn, Mrs C— related what had been the occaſion of Arabella's diſtreſs.

IN the morning, when ſhe had gone to ſchool, there were only three young ladies in the ſchool-room. In an adjoining room ſtood a baſket of fruit, which the ladies it ſeems had made free with, each of them having pocketed two apples.

On Arabella entering, who was a great favourite, one of them went tip-toe back to the room, and taking two more of the apples, brought them to Arabella; telling her at the ſame time, that each of them had taken two, and that the baſket was ſtill ſo full, ſhe was ſure they would not be miſſed.

Arabella, bluſhing up to the ears, ſaid, indeed ſhe would not accept of any thing that was ſtolen. Her companions, bridling, and repeating the word *ſtolen*, ſaid, they did not conſider taking a few apples ſtealing; and they were ſure nobody but herſelf would.

Arabella ſaid, her Mama had taught her to believe, that the ſame principle which could induce a perſon to ſteal a trifle, would lead them to ſteal a thing of value, if the fear of puniſhment or ſham

ſhame did not prevent them; adding, with the tear in her eye, ſhe was very ſorry they were capable of doing ſuch a thing; for that her Mama had alſo informed her, that concealing a theft was as bad as committing it. She therefore begged they would carry back the apples; otherwiſe ſhe ſhould think herſelf obliged to tell the governeſs: a thing which ſhe was ſure would give her as much pain as it would do them.

THE young ladies, who had no conception of Arabella's feelings, told her, if ſhe informed the governeſs, they would never ſpeak to her in their lives, but would point at her as a tale-bearer, which was twenty times worſe than a thief; and though it ſhould be known, nobody would conſider them thieves for taking a few apples.

Arabella anſwered with firmneſs, that they had much better than tell the governeſs, and ſave her ſo diſagreeable an office. She knew, ſhe ſaid, thoſe who were conſidered tale-bearers were ſuch as went about from houſe to houſe making people quarrel with one another, and telling every idle tale they heard to any perſon's diſadvantage, without knowing whether they were true or falſe; and that though they were not generally conſidered ſo bad as thieves, they often did more miſchief: that although ſhe was very young, her Mama had made her underſtand the difference betwixt a tale-bearer who takes pleaſure in breeding miſchief, and one who does it from a principle of honeſty.

One of the young ladies, with a laugh of deriſion, ſaid ſhe ſhould take care

care and not make a preſent again to *Miſs Honeſty*. The other two propoſed laying back the apples, if Miſs Arabella would promiſe not to mention it. With eyes ſparkling with pleaſure, Arabella gave her word that ſhe would never utter a ſyllable on the ſubject to any perſon in the world. The other young lady making ſome objections during the debate, a ſervant carried off the baſket.

THEY now with one conſent begged and prayed that Arabella would not tell the governeſs, and they never would do ſuch a thing again; and would do any thing for her that ſhe would aſk to oblige her. Arabella was not to be bribed; but their intention of carrying back the apples, and the love ſhe had for her companions, pled ſtrongly in their favour; at the ſame time they

could get her to promiſe nothing till ſhe ſhould aſk her Mama's advice, which ſhe always did, ſhe ſaid, when ſhe was any way difficulted.

As the young ladies were only afraid of their governeſs, and did not care who knew ſo it was concealed from her, they conſented without inſulting Arabella farther, who they ſaw was not to be frightened from her purpoſe.

The young creature had continued very thoughtful and dull all the morning; and as ſhe went home, her little heart ſwelled ſo much, that ſhe was obliged to go into a by-corner and give vent to her tears. This ſomewhat relieved her, till ſitting down to dinner they again overcame her as before mentioned.

Mrs

Mrs C— having finiſhed her recital, aſked her eldeſt daughter how ſhe would have acted had ſhe been in her ſiſter's place? Indeed, returned Miſs C—, I ſhould have been as uneaſy as Arabella, and as much puzzled; and I think I ſhould have done exactly as ſhe did, come home and aſked your advice. And what would you have done, Charles, in ſuch a caſe, ſaid his father? I'll tell you, Sir, replied Charles, what I think I ſhould have done; but perhaps in my confuſion it might not have occurred, ſo I probably would have done the ſame as Arabella. Although the loſs of a few apples could be of no conſequence to the governeſs, yet to ſhow the young ladies that I would not be acceſſory in ſeeing her wronged even in a trifle, and at the ſame time as I would not have liked to inform againſt them, eſpecially as they

had conſented to return the fruit, I think I ſhould have bought as many apples as had been taken from the baſket, and made the governeſs a preſent of them in lieu of what ſhe had loſt. Arabella bluſhed; but immediately recollecting herſelf, ſaid, but do you know, brother, I had not as much money as would have bought ſo many fine apples. You behaved exceedingly well, my dear child, ſaid Mr C—; and taking Charles by the hand, it gives me inexpreſſible pleaſure (ſaid he) to find that my children have ſo ſtrong a ſenſe of what is right and wrong, and can act with reſolution in defiance of the ridicule which thoughtleſs youth, and very often even people advanced in life, endeavour to throw upon them who keep ſtrictly to their duty. I hope my dear children, in every ſtage of life, ſhall act conſiſtently with the principles

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in which they have been ſo early inſtructed. I hope ſo, replied Miſs C—; but pray, Mama, how do you mean to ſettle the matter betwixt Arabella and the young ladies?

WHY, my dear, much in the ſame way as your brother Charles thinks he would have done. To-morrow I have promiſed your ſiſter to ſend a baſket of fruit in a preſent to the governeſs; and taking Arabella by the hand, I intend to make amends to my ſweet girl for the pain ſhe has ſuffered, by ſending another baſket, which ſhe is to have the pleaſure of diſtributing amongſt her ſchool-fellows; and I have deſired her to aſſure the three young ladies who took the apples, that I did not inquire their names, but, on the contrary, approved very much her concealing them,

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in hopes they will never be guilty of such a thing again.

Mr C— obſerved, that the young ladies having conſidered taking the fruit as nothing more than a frolic, was entirely owing to the careleſsneſs of their inſtructors, who had left their minds open to bad example. The diſeaſes of the mind, continued he, reſemble exactly the diſeaſes of the body. Some conſtitutions are naturally ſo good as to be proof againſt every infection, but theſe are few; yet by care and cuſtom moſt conſtitutions may be made ſo: For example, the phyſician and apothecary, although daily with the diſeaſed, ſeldom catch an infection; ſo it is with the diſtempers of the mind. If we are made thoroughly to underſtand their evil tendency, and are properly guarded by reaſon,

there is little hazard of being infected; whereas thoſe minds who go abroad without inſtruction, generally catch every folly and adopt every vice to which their inclination leads them. Some perhaps ſtop at one point, ſome at another; but many, my dear Charles, (addreſſing himſelf to his ſon), go on from one ſtep to another, till their whole mind becomes a maſs of corruption; and at laſt are often led to commit crimes too horrid to mention.

It is not avoiding bad company, Charles, which I recommend as neceſſary to preſerve you from being corrupted: If you mix with the world, it is impoſſible. Beſides, I look on it as a duty to ſhow, that though we deſpiſe the vice, we have no diſlike to the perſon; but, on the contrary, would wiſh to prove by our example, that hap-

happineſs can only be attained by virtue. Arabella very early has ſhown a ſpirit which would reflect honour on one twice her age; it is in being proof againſt the ridicule and laugh of folly, which is the teſt of wiſdom. If Arabella's companions are not improved by her example, they will at leaſt take care and not attempt to corrupt her again. A virtuous perſon has a prodigious advantage over thoſe who are otherwiſe. When a good character is once eſtabliſhed on a ſolid foundation, bad people are often proud to be ſeen in their company, generally carefully concealing their follies or vices in their preſence; and very often to ſtagger your belief, in caſe they ſuſpect you have heard their character, they are critically ſevere on ſome perſon or other addicted to the vice for which they are ſuſpected, nay ſometimes notorious.

It would be uncharitable to ſay that good people are never cenſorious: but believe me, my dear children, you may take it as a general rule, that thoſe who are much given to cenſure, and who take this method to enhance their own merit, have generally either very weak heads or bad hearts; for moſt part indeed they go together. People of ſolid underſtanding muſt be aſtoniſhed to ſee human beings, to whom God has given ſo great a proportion of free will, acting parts which ſo viſibly counteract their own intereſt; but inſtead of expreſſing hatred or ill-will, they will compaſſionate their error, being much afraid that their ſufferings (if not at preſent) will ſome time or other be greatly aggravated by a conſciouſneſs of having brought them on themſelves.

INDEED, replied Mr Charles, I am ſure we ſhould be very inexcuſable were we to act improperly, who have had our duty ſo clearly pointed out to us; and I think we would have very bad hearts if we did not pity thoſe who have not the ſame advantage.

I am very happy, Charles, returned his father, to hear your opinion. It ſurely can be no ſurpriſe to ſee youth going aſtray, who have had neither precept nor example to improve them; but what we ſee daily, and yet to a thinking mind is nevertheleſs aſtoniſhing, is people whoſe reaſon is fully ripened by obſervation and experience; and who, to hear them expreſs their ſentiments, you could have no doubt of their merit: yet theſe very people will be acting as diametrically contrary to common ſenſe, as if they were

were perfectly ignorant of their danger; ſome ſlyly ſtealing through the avenues of vice, and others galloping full career through every evil which money can purchaſe. This, Mrs C— obſerved, muſt be aſcribed to bad habits early contracted. I ſuppoſe, continued ſhe, the children whoſe parents treat them with ſeverity, and who now and then obtain a ſtolen pleaſure, will moſt probably continue to cheat themſelves and the world through life: that children, on the contrary, whoſe little paſſions are under no controul, will, when they grow men and women, find their paſſions too ſtrong for their reaſon; and that nothing but arbitrary power can prevent them from acting like mad people.

INDEED, my dear, replied Mr C—, you are right; and, in my opinion,

they who are entirely bereft of reaſon, are much leſs to be pitied than thoſe who have reaſon and want power, or I ſhould rather ſay reſolution to act up to it.

MRS C— propoſed taking an airing, as Arabella's eyes were not yet fit for working. With all my heart, replied Mr C—, let us give the children a little pleaſure. The young creatures mutually expreſſed their joy; Charles and Miſs C— careſſing Arabella, and endeavouring all in their power to make her amends for her paſt trouble by the moſt affectionate attention. The pleaſure this amiable family experienced on their little excurſion can be more eaſily imagined than expreſſed. Indeed, independent of thoſe caſualities which more or leſs our Creator has ordained in this ſtate of imperfection, they certainly enjoy a very great degree of happineſs

happineſs from living a life of reaſon, far ſuperior to people who endeavour to extract pleaſure from an extravagant round of folly and diſſipation, or thoſe who, in the oppoſite extreme, frighten themſelves and followers from every rational pleaſure, and often cracking their brain to explain myſteries, which common ſenſe may teach us can neither be ſerviceable to ourſelves, our neighbour, or our God.

LETTER XXIX.

I Was favoured, my friend, with a return to my laſt; and can aſſure you I am not at all offended at your ſuppoſition, that Mr and Mrs C— are characters reared up in my imagination for your inſtruction. You are fully convinced, you ſay, that the wiſdom of Solomon could not reform ſuch a fooliſh woman as Mrs C—, arrived at the age of five and thirty.

I ſhall not pretend to ſay how far I am miſtaken; but in my opinion, there is no age, infancy and dotage excepted, but the force of reaſon will penetrate, if adminiſtered with reſolution and tenderneſs. I look on people, ſuch as Mrs C—, who are particularly aſſiduous in pleaſing

pleaſing ſtrangers and ſuperiors, and at the ſame time are unreaſonable and inſolent to thoſe whom God and nature have fixed as their family connections; I look on them much in the light of children perpetually quarelling amongſt themſelves; but at the ſight of a pretty maſter or miſs dreſſed and attended more elegantly than they are, will part with their play-things, and find their little hearts elated with pride at having it in their power to entertain them: while they, on their part, think they have condeſcended in accepting of their gifts, and very probably dare not inform their right honourable parents that they have amuſed themſelves with children ſo much their inferiors. How many are there alſo who, like Mrs C— before her reformation, look on people whom they conſider as one ſtep below them, with all the haughtineſs imaginable? Others perhaps ſhowing a little

more civility, yet take care to keep a prudent diſtance, afraid that the leaſt familiarity with an inferior would leſſen them in the opinion of ſuch company as they imagine their birth, their fortune, their appearance, merit, or ſomething or other intitles them to keep. Should not we imagine, if thoſe haughty and political gentry (which I dare ſay is often the caſe) are in their turn overlooked by their ſuperiors, and feel alternately hurt by their inattention, and elated by their ſmiles; if they have experienced the heart-felt pleaſures of favours received, and the gnawing pain of diſappointment in what they imagined well-grounded expectation; would not we, I ſay, be led to imagine, that it would make ſuch an impreſſion on their minds, as would teach them to do as they wiſh they had been done by, and not revenge the inſult on thoſe who had given them no offence? But ſuch

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is the way of the world, every one aiming at ſelf-conſequence by the very means which ſtrongly marks their inſignificance. But I am forgetting what I meant to obſerve, viz. that thoſe children who are in years and ſize men and women, are generally obſtinate as mules, very much given to averſions which they fancy to be delicacy of taſte. They build their conſequence on negative virtues, having no other; and endeavour to ridicule every body who gives any poſitive proof of their merit. If, like Mrs C—, they are twigs of an old branch, they have a prodigious averſion at people of low and obſcure birth; a great averſion to people in a line immediately below them, or to thoſe whom, in the faſhionable phraſe, nobody knows: but, if you'll obſerve, make it but their intereſt to pay their court to a perſon of any one of theſe denominations, and you will

will often ſee the averſion fly to the other extreme. Self-intereſt, like a loadſtone, draws them from their prejudices and averſions; and when this point is gained, treat the patient gently, and you will ſoon ſee common ſenſe break in upon them, light up their reaſon, and make them think, ſpeak, and act, like rational creatures.

THAT rank and fortune is a very great worldly advantage every body muſt allow; and a perſon even in confined circumſtances, when allied to people of fortune and rank, have a natural right to expect, from the intereſt of their connections, to be placed in ſuch a ſituation as their appearance or abilities will beſt ſuit; and in this view high birth is ſurely of itſelf an advantage: but if (as is too often the caſe) they reap no other advantage but the bare knowledge of the alliance, or perhaps

haps a little diſtant civility, to be vain of this, and to look on themſelves as ſuperior to them who are in every other reſpect on an equality, and very often, in point of fortune, merit, and many other reſpects, their ſuperiors, is truly ludicrous. Nay, this pride of family is often carried ſo far, as to make many a one half ſtarve before they would diſgrace their birth, as they think it, by an honeſt employment which faſhion has ſtamped ungenteel. But you will obſerve, pride is always more or leſs a ſignal of folly. When carried to a height, and ſhows itſelf by inſolence or intentional neglect to a modeſt and deſerving perſon who claims attention, you may be perfectly certain that the ſenſe of that man is overgrown with rubbiſh, or elſe there is a mighty void. In the words of Pope,

——— Pride ſteps in to his defence,
And fills up all the mighty void of ſenſe.

THERE are many men who are equally fooliſh with Mrs C— in the days of her folly. There is nothing more common than to hear a perſon of this caſt inveighing againſt one, as he would ſay, who is ſprung from the dunghill, who pretends to outvie him in fortune or appearance; whereas a man of real ſenſe and good diſpoſition, on the contrary, would take pleaſure to ſee a perſon enjoying the fruits of his induſtry or merit; and if introduced to his acquaintance, would not pay him leſs attention than he would the firſt gentleman in the kingdom. Cuſtom has indeed eſtabliſhed certain rules of precedency, which well-bred people comply with, without conſidering it as a matter of importance; but in every material point, a man of ſolid underſtanding, and endowed with natural politeneſs, will entertain his gueſts with equal good manners and attention: at leaſt

leaſt it is by no means either birth, rank, or fortune, that will mark the diſtinction. If there is a perſon in company who is ſignalized by a flow of wit and humour, every body will naturally pay him particular attention. If a ſubject is ſtarted that one perſon can talk more clearly on than another, his judgement, or perhaps a happy turn of expreſſion, will engage the general attention; and ſometimes even loquacious folly will oblige a company to liſten: but this ſeldom laſts if there is a perſon of good ſenſe or ſterling wit in the company: though the loquacious gentleman (in the words of Burgoyne) ſhould be a ſprig of quality, he will not be allowed long to monopolize the converſation. You will perhaps aſk me what are the advantages of birth, rank, and fortune, if I will not allow the poſſeſſor more conſequence than a wit with an empty pocket? Why, my friend,

ſo

ſo far from being of any good conſe-
quence, unleſs in the poſſeſſion of a man
of ſenſe and principle, it is the very re-
verſe. Fortune, in the hands of a fool,
a ſpendthrift, or a miſer, renders them
conſpicuouſly ridiculous; and I make
no ſcruple to ſay, that that man who
has deſervedly the character of either
independent of another world, would
have had more real ſatisfaction in this
had he been born a beggar, than with
fortune and power, and knows not pro-
perly how to uſe it: but on the other
hand, the real good man of rank and
fortune has many advantages, which
neither ſenſe alone, wit, nor all the fine
accompliſhments in the world, cannot
always obtain. He has it in his power
without injuring his fortune, to prac-
tice every virtue which the man of feel-
ing without fortune can only expreſs.
He is benevolent, kind, generous, as
occaſion requires. If he courts publi-

favour, it is to extend his power of doing good. His ſucceſs animates and diſpoſes him to private duties, the entertaining of his friends, the promoting and partaking of all the innocent enjoyments of life. If he hears of a perſon who from indigence is raiſed to affluence, he conſiders him as a favourite of Providence, and wiſhes, by precept and example, to teach him to make his fortune ſubſervient to good purpoſes, and alſo to introduce him into ſuch company as his fortune intitles him to. What ſays the fine gentleman who piques himſelf on the airs and graces? What ſays the right honourable mounted aloft on the hobby of heraldry? And what ſays the gentleman of yeſterday, who has drank the waters of Lethe? Would I have a perſon, riſen from nothing, without education, without any degree of merit, becauſe chance has thrown a fortune in his lap; ſhall he,

perhaps a clown of the firſt order, be admitted into the ſociety of people of diſtinction? Why not. This clown, allowing him to be ſo, is entruſted with the means of raiſing a family which ſome hundred years hence may probably make no deſpicable figure in heraldry: from this root, if properly attended to, may ſpring a thouſand, nay ten thouſand, beautiful branches. It becomes therefore the duty of the lord of the manor where this man reſides, to inſtruct, guide, and adviſe him in his new ſtation. The man of rank and fortune, with liberal ſentiments and a good heart, would be highly delighted to unruſtify, if I may uſe the expreſſion, this favourite of fortune; who, without the countenance and protection of a man of his conſequence, inſtead of becoming a valuable member of ſociety, inſtead of enjoying thoſe refined pleaſures which fortune has put in his power,

power, moſt probably would be rendered miſerable by his acquiſition and his money: inſtead of ſerving any good purpoſe, either ſquanders, moulders away, or from time to time becomes the property of the ignorant and fooliſh: And thus, by mere pride and folly, our country is impoveriſhed, and we muſt have recourſe to war, ſtratagem, law, and phyſic, to patch a broken conſtitution, till death ends the farce, and lays the pride of man in the duſt.

The man of fortune whom I ſhall attempt to deſcribe, would, in the firſt place, adviſe this fortunate perſon how to ſecure or lay out his money to the beſt advantage. He would not all at once introduce him into the drawing-room to laugh at his oddities, or expoſe him to the ridicule of the vain and fooliſh. He would not adviſe him to employ the dancing-maſter, the riding or fencing maſter, to

new-model his attitudes, and teach him the graces; neither would he adviſe him to dreſs in a gaudy or expenſive habit, becoming to thoſe only accuſtomed to wear it: he would converſe with him privately with the familiarity of a friend, and dwell particularly on the importance of his new ſtation; he would endeavour to make him underſtand, that fortune could only be conſidered a bleſſing according to the proper uſe the proprietor put it to; and as he from inexperience might probably be difficulted, he would offer him all the advice and aſſiſtance in his power. The honeſt clown, elated with the kindneſs of his honourable friend, and well acquainted with his valuable character, promiſes with ſincerity to be directed by him in all his tranſactions. This great and good man, delighted with the importance of his voluntary taſk, ſees in proſpect the happy conſequence of his interference.

In what way, you'll aſk me, does he proceed? To anſwer you negatively, in the firſt place, he does not adviſe him to drop by degrees his friends and acquaintance; on the contrary, he tells him, that every one of them in ſome degree are to be benefited by his good fortune; and that, according to the nearneſs of the connection, or to their ſeveral deſerts, he will from time to time point out to him in what manner he may ſerve them without injuring his property. He adviſes him againſt being too liberal in his promiſes; but by paying attention to their grievances, and by real acts of kindneſs, ſhow that he has both the will and the power to do them good offices. If he has a wife and children, he makes himſelf acquainted with them, ſo as to judge what may be expected with regard to their improvement. If the children are very young, he takes upon himſelf the direction of their education. If grown

to men and women, he finds out a genteel private family, whoſe circumſtances make them not above accepting of them as boarders; and who have good ſenſe and taſte to open the human mind, and by degrees improve their appearance and manners.

In the idea we have of a complete fine gentleman or lady, we comprehend form, beauty, mental qualifications, with every elegant accompliſhment in its higheſt perfection. But how many of ſuch are there to be found? Examine the aſſemblies of the great, we ſhall ſee, that for one that can be accounted ſuch, there are thouſands who can be no otherwiſe diſtinguiſhed from the vulgar than from the richneſs of their dreſs, the circle of their acquaintance, faſhionable follies, faſhionable amuſements (not to ſay faſhionable vices), with all the neceſſary ingredients which form the taſte for expenſive pleaſures,

res, and with all the politeſs which akes up the flummery of high life. ake from them theſe qualifications, and ou will bring them entirely on a level ith the ſons and daughters of the own. But here I muſt correct my er-r.

THIS faſhionable circle, to be ſure, can ad and write; many of them under- and French, Muſic, Painting, with per- aps a few more *et ceteras*, of which the ns and daughters of the clown are en- rely ignorant. What then? A year or o at moſt will give them ſuch a ſmat- ring of all theſe branches of education, will bring them up to the general ſtan- ard; a ſtandard which is of no ſort of e to the poſſeſſor. And, pray, what is e difference betwixt a perſon who can ither read nor write and another who an, but wants taſte, inclination, or time, render them either amuſing or uſeful?

And

And indeed what is the difference betwi
one who has a ſmattering of every thin
and him who knows nothing? Why,
the former has common ſenſe he will
equally ſilent with the perſon who is pe
fectly ignorant. So that in fact a recei
to make a modern fine gentleman or lad
if there is money enough to purchaſe t
materials, and opportunity to make uſe
them, can be no ſort of difficulty, for
the fuſs that is generally made about
Indeed it is to be expected, that the chi
dren of the clown, under the directi
of ſuch a man as I have attempted to d
ſcribe, will turn out greatly ſuperior
many who are by no means conſider
deſpicable members in genteel ſociet
Nay, if there are any of them in infan
or childhood, when grown up they m
very poſſibly vie with the higheſt ord
of human beings. As the wildeſt flowe
tranſplanted from the field to the garde
by the ſkill and attention of the gardener b
com

omes the moſt beautiful, or to the botaiſt of the greateſt importance; ſo may he ſons and daughters of the clown tranſplanted early), by education, be endered the brighteſt and moſt uſeful nembers of ſociety. How cruel is it herefore, and impolitical, not to water heſe young plants whom providence, I nay ſay, has tranſplanted into a rich ſoil, nd not through pride and folly ſpurn out whom God by his bounty has brought forward! However, I am happy to obſerve that this evil is wearing out, and hat mankind are gradually getting the better of thoſe illiberal ſentiments which impoveriſhed our country, and often made the ſucceſſion to a fortune the greateſt evil that could befal a poor man; who, contented with his humble lot, of a ſudden was overwhelmed with his riches, his ſenſes overpowered, or intoxicated by a confuſion of ideas which he knew not how to arrange; haraſ-

ſed

ſed by a ſet of mercenaries, and in th
end cheated of his property, and rende
ed miſerable by the means which ough
to have encreaſed his pleaſures, an
drawn his family from obſcurity.

THE people who make their fortun
through induſtry or genius, do not la
bour under ſo much inconveniency
they generally have ſeen ſo much of th
world, as not only to prevent their be
coming a prey to the deſigning, but alſo
in ſome reſpect, put them on an equalit
with them who are conſidered as peopl
of diſtinction. But I have often obſerved
although their merit and fortune has diſ
tinguiſhed them amongſt their own ſex
my fair country-women have a particula
averſion to what we call men of no family
ſo much, that I have often heard a young
lady of a few hundreds, or perhaps with
out a farthing, declare ſhe would not have
a man of obſcure family if he had the
wealth

ealth of the Indies. If good ſenſe, li-
eral ſentiments, and engaging addreſs,
ere confined to men of family, I ſhould
ery much commend their taſte: but
hile there are ſo many Sir John Brutes,
many Sir Francis Wrongheads, Lord
oppingtons; ſo many Horſe-racers,
amblers; in ſhort, ſo many Fools of
uality, I would ſtrongly recommend to
y fair friends to put family out of the
ueſtion, and not refuſe ſuch men for
eir huſbands whoſe good conduct has
ſtabliſhed their character, and who either
ave made a fortune or can provide for
em in a reputable manner by an ho-
eſt and reſpectable employment. I
ave been often aſtoniſhed at the little at-
ention which is paid to young gentlemen
ho come from all quarters of the globe
o this city to ſtudy medicine; young
en who, by their appearance and edu-
ation, are intitled to the beſt company;
nd who, from their ſpending ſo much

money in the place, ought to be looked o
by the citizens with gratitude and reſpec
The pretence which is given for th
breach of hoſpitality is, in the firſt plac
their being young men whom nobod
knows; ſecondly, they are come here
purſue their ſtudies, and to lead them i
to company would be doing them an i
jury; thirdly, the few who have bee
honoured by our particular attentio
have for moſt part turned out exceedingl
ill, and gone off indebted to every on
with whom they had any connection
and, laſtly, were they to be generally en
couraged, they might carry off our youn
ladies, who would be diſgracing their pa
rentage by marrying men whom nobod
knows. To me all theſe reaſons appea
to have no weight. In the firſt plac
we have only to aſk ourſelves, how w
would like it, if our young friends, o
going to England or to any other country
ſhould not be taken notice of, and de
barre

barred dancing at an aſſembly, for the ſame reaſon, or becauſe they are come, not to ſpend their money, but with an intention to make their livelihood and puſh their fortune?

The ſecond objection, viz. the drawing them from their ſtudies, no perſon, eſpecially at their time of life, but requires to unbend their minds by recreation and amuſement; and I have no doubt, if the ſtudents were taken proper notice of, there would very few of them be led aſide by extravagance or diſſipation; nay, to me it is often a wonder, that ſo many young men, left to be their own maſters amongſt people to whom they owe no ſort of reſpect, ſhould behave ſo well as they generally do. It indeed ſerves to convince me, that young people in general are much better than their ſeniors. It is the folly of people in advanced life which in fact deſtroys

the morals of the youth of both ſexes. But what is the reaſon, you'll aſk me, that the gentlemen who has been ſignalized by the notice of the beſt company, have generally turned out worſt? The reaſon is obvious; becauſe the beſt company picked out thoſe who, very probably from an eaſy aſſurance, the Cheſterfield graces, and a genius for extravagance, were conſidered men whom every body knew; while the greater number of modeſt, well-behaved young gentlemen, who merited attention, were entirely neglected. I am glad to hear we have now got at our aſſemblies a maſter of ceremonies, who, I hope, will take care and provide every ſtranger with partners; and though they ſhould carry off ſome of our young ladies, I am perſuaded neither party will be loſers. It will at leaſt be much better for the ladies, who, with ſmall fortunes, in a few years may probably be obliged to ſtand in the rear of their more for-

fortunate companions. If it is abſolutely neceſſary that ſo many of our young gentlemen ſhould leave their country to puſh their fortune, we ſurely ought to have no objection at ſome of our young women going alſo. But I forget; young men who form attachments, or marry before they have finiſhed their ſtudies, are conſidered to be ruined paſt redemption; conſequently their fair partners, independent of the ſtigma which ariſes from being chained to people whom nobody knows, muſt be ruined alſo. I confeſs I am of a contrary opinion. If a young man, of good ſenſe and principle, is attached to an amiable young woman, he will purſue his ſtudies with far greater eagerneſs, if he either marries or is engaged, than if he had not an honourable attachment. And I aver, that it is the intereſt of every man to have a wife who ſettles in any buſineſs or profeſſion, more particularly the apothecary and phyſician.

As I have before obſerved, if parents have the welfare of their children at heart, and the intereſt of their country, they will, by every laudable means, promote early marriages.

It is very natural for young women to be pleaſed with admiration or attention; it is alſo natural for them to form attachments, where either real or ſuppoſed merit courts their affection: and that woman who prefers a coronet on her coach, a large ſettlement, or any other inducement, to the man who has won her affections, and has a right to her hand, I make no ſcruple to ſay is a woman without either honour or delicacy; at the ſame time, from the little chance which women generally have to marry the men they would prefer, I by no means think they ſhould remain ſingle, if they receive a ſuitable offer, although they ſhould not feel that tender affection which perhaps

they either have felt, or hope to feel, for the man they wiſh to marry. I firmly believe, if a virtuous woman be married to a man of ſenſe and principle, ſhe will ſoon have for him an affection equally ſtrong and laſting as if ſhe had married the man of her choice. If there is a deficiency indeed of ſenſe and principle on either ſide, it cannot be expected, were the love ever ſo great, that it ſhould outlive the honey-moon.

When I look around, and ſee ſo many families with perhaps five or ſix fine young women kept up at a great expence, attended and admired by people whom every body knows, and who very probably in a few years, three or four at leaſt of the ſix, muſt ſink amongſt the number of thoſe who are known by nobody; I cannot help looking with wonder and aſtoniſhment, that if our young men muſt be ſent out of the country, there are not

ſome contrivances made for the eſtabliſh-ment of ſuch females who are left ſingle and unprotected, and not allow them to be conſidered as hangers-on on their rela-tions, with perhaps ſcarce ſo much mo-ney at intereſt as would keep them for a twelvemonth in their father's houſe, and be beſtowed upon them at a birth-night ball: yet ſuch is the conduct of parents who pretend to have, and I believe have, an affection for their children, they look no farther to inſure their happineſs than the preſent moment; and will very often even go ſo far as to refuſe forgiving them, ſhould they marry a man whom, as they uſually expreſs themſelves, nobody knows.

WHAT is the reaſon, it is alleged, there are ſo many fretful, ill-looking, diſcon-tented, old maids? Is it becauſe they have not got huſbands? No. If they have money enough to enſure their conſe-

quence,

uence, entertain their friends, dreſs in
e mode of the times; take my word for it
ey will neither be particularly ill-look-
g, fretful, nor diſcontented: but if
ou'll conſider the preſent ſtate of the
reater number of ſolitary maidens in this
ountry, you need not be ſurpriſed at
eir being peeviſh and ill-looking. Put
s many of you mighty ſovereigns of the
reation under the ſame predicament, I
m perſuaded two-thirds of you would
ang or drown yourſelves in leſs than a
welvemonth. You'll perhaps ſay, why
on't we do ſo who can ſo eaſily be
ſpared? But to ſet joking apart, it ought
o be the care of the public to form ſuch
n eſtabliſhment, as to prevent ſo many
f their daughters, bred with all the care
nd tenderneſs imaginable, from being
eft the beſt part of their lives to ſuffer
very evil attending confined circumſtan-
ces; and this even aggravated by the
much dreaded epithet of Old Maid.

An

An epithet which, ſo far from deſervin
contempt, ought to command particula
reſpect. But this is one of the contra
dictory and abſurd cuſtoms (the ridicu
ling of old maids) which is practiſed b
all ranks, and which conſequently ſerv
to frighten many young women into im
proper marriges, if not worſe; whi
their fooliſh parents imagines, by buoy
ing up their minds with what they call
proper pride, they are doing all that
neceſſary to prevent it. Strange infatu
tion! that mankind ſhould boaſt of the
wiſdom, yet be ſo wanting in commo
ſenſe and humanity. It has often bee
talked of by way of wit, that the
ſhould be a conſiderable tax laid on o
batchelors to induce them to marry,
oblige them to bear a good hand in pa
ing the national debt. It would be muc
better that every county ſhould agree
a voluntary taxation on themſelves,
raiſe a fund to ſupport or augment th
incom

ncome of ſuch females as can be conſi-
ered deſerving their attention; and that
o far from leſſening the conſequence of
he annuitants, particular attention and
reſpect ſhould be ſhown them in every
ompany, in order to wear out that il-
iberal practice of ridicule and neglect,
hich is ſo impolitic as well as cruel and
njuſt. You'll perhaps tell me, that ſuch
a propoſal would come with a better
race, if I was not ſo particularly con-
erned; that moſt probably I ſhall get
he laugh againſt me; and that even my
ompanions in affliction will give me no
hanks for the propoſal. I confeſs I have
een generally unfortunate with regard to
y plans, both with reſpect to my own
rivate emolument and the good of others.
ut although this is rather diſcouraging,
I ſtill go on, not regardleſs of the conſe-
uences, but with that degree of reſolu-
ion which a good intention is apt to in-
pire. But ſanguine as I may be with re-

gard

gard to this propoſal, I can ſcarce ſup
poſe ſo eligible an eſtabliſhment will eve
take place in my time. The world
too buſily engaged in what are conſider
ed affairs of conſequence, to pay atten
tion or improve upon the hint of a femal
author. Beſides, it would take a num
ber of years before a ſufficient fund coul
be eſtabliſhed fit for the purpoſe. It
not the preſent ſet of ſolitary maidens wh
ſit alone in their dreary abodes that ar
particularly concerned, and who fro
being long accuſtomed to neglect are i
ſome meaſure reſigned to their fate; it
the heads of families, who we may ſuppo
muſt naturally wiſh, that if their daug
ters are not married, they may be pu
on a footing ſo as to retain ſufficient con
ſequence to render them comfortable i
the evening of their days, when attentio
and reſpect becomes moſt neceſſary.

In order to make them uſeful mem
ber

ers of ſociety, and to enſure their plea-
re and conſequence, I would have every
ounty annuitant to have under her care
nd protection two children whoſe pa-
ents are dead, or in any reſpect not fit
o protect them; and theſe children to
e ſo much conſidered their own by
doption, that without their conſent they
hall not be taken from them to be given
o another, unleſs it can be proved they
re unfit for the taſk. You'll probably
hink I am now making contradictory
ropoſals; that I wiſh to promote matri-
ony, yet at the ſame time by providing
o amply for the maidens, would encreaſe
he number of coquettes, who from a
pirit of emulation would be all aſpiring
to obtain the honourable diſtinction of
ounty-annuitants. You need not, my
riend, be afraid of this. Let the young
nen engage the affections of amiable wo-
nen, and believe me they will not re-
ject their honourable propoſals, either for
intereſt

intereſt or a feather in their cap: and
ye make kind and indulgent huſband
your wives will rejoice in their good fo
tune, nor envy the happineſs of t
maidens. Adieu.

LET

LETTER XXX.

YOU think in all my plans there is great room for improvement. That I allow. It is not to be expected that I can make calculations or enter into the intricacies, the *pros* and *cons*, which may be ſaid for or againſt them. I only, in all humility, give my opinion. It gave me great pleaſure ſome time ago to read in the news papers of ſo many honeſt tradeſmen being knighted by the king on preſenting the addreſs of the ſeveral counties on his majeſty's late preſervation: for though this was conſidered by the wits as an excellent ſubject for ſatire, I cannot help thinking the diſtinguiſhing and honouring thoſe who make good mem-

bers of ſociety, and who enrich their families, conſequently the country, by honeſt and fair means, muſt be highly political. We are naturally to ſuppoſe, that each gentleman honoured by preſenting the addreſs, was choſen as one of the moſt reſpectable in the county he was to repreſent. Faſhion at any time, like a magic wand, could make any art or ſcience reſpectable. And indeed it is aſtoniſhing that the nobility and gentry, who have large families, inſtead of ſending their younger ſons abroad to allienate their affections from their family, their friends, and their country; inſtead of buoying up their young minds in gaining honour by the ſword, pillaging nabobs, or even by commerce in a diſtant land; do not find lucrative employments for them at home; do not faſhion every art and ſcience ſo as to enrich our country, baniſh pride and folly, and ren-

der

der us a prudent, wiſe, and a happy people.

THERE is nothing which appears a greater proof of a man's diſbelief of a future ſtate than pride, or to ſee him treating any of his fellow-creatures with undeſerved inſolence or contempt; for if we ſeriouſly wiſh that all mankind would act ſo as to obtain forgiveneſs and the mercy of their Creator, and believe that all who do are to be completely happy in the manſions of bleſs, it is ſurely inconſiſtent with this belief, that we ſhould endeavour to leſſen their happineſs here whom we hope to be our cotemporaries and equals hereafter.

IT is very certain that our Creator has ordained, in this world of probation, that there ſhall be different ranks, otherwiſe there would be no opportunity for the exerciſe of virtue: and as happineſs

is by no means confined to any particular ſtation, to riches or poverty, we have no reaſon to repine at the partiality of Providence. All mankind in ſome degree are left to the freedom of their own will, to purſue happineſs their own way, with conſcience to dictate, and a certain degree of reaſon to conduct them. The powers of reaſon not being equally ſtrong in every perſon nor the opportunity of improvement; there are conſequently many well-diſpoſed people who cannot put any poſitive virtue in practiſe, yet find a degree of happineſs without any exertion, and enjoy a placid ſerenity, with a conſcience void of offence towards God and man. Others, whoſe ſtrength of reaſon prompts them to improve and extend their abilities, generally have it in their power to render themſelves uſeful members of ſociety by various ways, according as their genius, bent of mind, or ſtrength of judgment, ſhall direct.

A

A man of independent fortune has no occaſion to watch his genius; his duty is to improve his underſtanding with a general knowledge of mankind, and to acquire thoſe accompliſhments which render him peculiarly pleaſing and agreeable. He will find ſufficient employment to manage his fortune to the beſt advantage, in giving employment, and rewarding thoſe who behave well in the different claſſes which his fortune intitles him to encourage. The ſeveral duties of huſband, parent, and brother; maſter, friend, and protector; with a practical example of all the virtues, makes his pleaſures undoubtedly more exquiſite, and his power of doing good more extenſive, than others who may have the inclination and taſte, without the ability, to exerciſe them. And here allow me to obſerve, it is not they who are thus favoured by fortune who are to ſhrink back at the approach of an inferior, or

by a haughty or reſerved behaviour awe them into what the vain and fooliſh term a proper diſtance; on the contrary, a good man, allowing his fortune and rank to be ever ſo great, will naturally wiſh that every perſon, whom either accident or deſign brings into his company, ſhould converſe with him on as eaſy and familiar a footing as if he was his equal in every reſpect. Although he cannot take equal pleaſure in every man's converſation, yet he thinks it his duty, and he by no means thinks he leſſens himſelf, to pay him that civility and attention which is every perſon's due. By this you'll perhaps imagine that I would bring all mankind on a level: by no means; the ſervant who is hired can never conſider himſelf on an equality with his maſter, who can ſay to him, go, and he goeth; come, and he cometh. At the ſame time you'll obſerve, it is the ſervant who, from the ſtation which providence has placed him,

naturally

naturally behaves with modeſt reſerve, nd in ſome degree diſtant reſpect. The maſter, independent of the ſervice required, ſpeaks to him occaſionally with affability; and if a good and faithful ſervant, with affection and kindneſs. Although a man of one hundred a-year, independent of the little cuſtomary rules of precedence, is equally intitled to civility and attention with a man of ten thouſand, and, as before obſerved, amongſt well-bred people will receive it; yet a man of ſmall fortune with ſenſe and prudence, would not wiſh to aſſociate often with people very far above him. In the firſt place, becauſe he would be obliged in conſequence to neglect his old friends and connections, who have a natural right to his attention; and ſecondly, becauſe he would find himſelf much happier in the company of thoſe whoſe views and pleaſures run in the ſame channel with his own, than with people very far above him

him in point of fortune, whom he cannot at all pretend to entertain in any degree on an equality: yet if he, from any particular circumſtance, is occaſionally invited to the table of the great, although ſenſible of the honour, he will not be elated, and his more particular enjoyments will generally lie elſewhere.

It is the ſame with people of genius or extenſive education. By the order of moral rectitude, they have no right to look with contempt on thoſe who have not theſe advantages: if they have good ſenſe, which indeed does not always attend learning and genius, they will not deſpiſe the ignorant. The inferior in knowledge as well as fortune, looks up to the ſuperior according as he deſerves, with pleaſure, admiration, and reſpect; at the ſame time, it is very natural not to wiſh to aſſociate frequently with perſons whoſe genius or taſte ſoar very far above our own:

own: whereas the man of genius or learning is as happy when he relaxes his mind with the plain habit of common ſenſe, or amuſing himſelf by innocent recreation, than when called forth to diſplay his abilities; which he conſiders of no value but ſo far as they can be rendered uſeful, and never wiſhes to ſhow them but when abſolutely neceſſary. Indeed we often conſider points of which we are ignorant in a more important light than they deſerve. We naturally look up with reſpect, and in ſome degree ſtand in awe of our ſuperiors, in either fortune or merit. This I have often experienced in ſpite of the admonitions of reaſon, which aſſured me there was not the leaſt occaſion; that no perſon deſerving of reſpect ever beſtowed a thought on their own ſuperiority but as a cauſe of thankfulneſs in having the means of rendering themſelves agreeable or uſeful to ſociety.

In every walk, in every ſtation of lif
it appears to proceed from a certain de
gree of folly, and often inhumanity
which makes the ſuperior overlook th
inferior who has any claim to his atten
tion, either through right of acquaint
ance or a view of intereſt. To me it e
ven appears ridiculouſly abſurd, for peo
ple of eſtabliſhed good principles, to ſhu
being ſeen in the company of ſuch wh
are ſuſpected of either bad principles o
practices. No man need be aſhamed t
be ſeen with the drunkard in his interva
of ſobriety, nor indeed occaſionally wit
a man of the moſt abandoned character
providing he does not aſſociate with hi
in his hours of riot. A perſon notoriouſ
ly wicked naturally aſſociates with ſuch
as himſelf; when he wiſhes to do other
wiſe, there is ſome hopes of his reforma
tion. It is therefore inconſiſtent wit
goodneſs to ſhun that perſon, whom w
can either by amuſement, converſation
o

example, hope to amend. The rigid aters of the wicked pretend to have an ntipathy or averſion to every perſon of ad character; and in ſpeaking with in-teracy and ill-nature, they fooliſhly i-agine they give a proof of their own rity; but to a perſon of the leaſt diſ-rnment it is the very reverſe. Place our averſion, my friend, againſt vice; our pity and compaſſion on the wicked, hoſe ſins even in the preſent world are enerally their own puniſhment.

THERE is one reaſon which the rigidly irtuous give for driving the wicked out f their ſociety. They pretend, by giving hem countenance, they are encouraging ice; and alſo as mankind are more prone o do evil than good, particular care hould be taken to keep out of the way of ad example. In anſwer to theſe objec-ions, it can by no means be encouraging ice the keeping company with them, whom

whom you believe to act improperly providing you do not give them reason by your behaviour or converſation, ſuppoſe you approve, or would aſſociate with them in their hours of folly or diſſipation. We can hardly believe that any perſon can ever be tempted to drunkenneſs by viewing the pimpled or bloated face of the drunkard, or tempted to imitation by the ſtupid appearance and effluvia of the tippler. We can never imagine that the emaciated look of the rake, or the duns attending the door of the ſpendthrift, can ever induce a perſon of good principles, or I may ſay common ſenſe to follow any of theſe examples. But why, then, it may be aſked, does mankind ſo often act contrary to conviction? why are people of the beſt underſtandings ſlaves to their paſſions? and why do we hear daily of men of the ſtrongeſt abilities guilty of flagrant crimes, which would ſtrike a timid honeſt ſoul with horror to

think on? is it not owing to the force of bad example, which firſt induces them to taſte the forbidden fruit, and gradually wears them on, contrary to their better judgment, to complete their ruin? Is it not then neceſſary, particularly neceſſary, to keep youth out of the company of ſuch who (from their eaſy complying tempers) may be led aſtray before reaſon has acquired ſufficient ſtrength even to withſtand the leaſt ſolicitation? In anſwer to this, it is the height of folly (as the world goes) to imagine it poſſible to keep either youth or age from the invitations of the fooliſh: but I look on it as very poſſible to impreſs youth early with a love of truth and an ambition to excel in wiſdom; the teſt of which is a command of the paſſions, and a firmneſs and reſolution not to be ridiculed or laughed into the ſnares laid by the fooliſh, and followed only by the ſimple.

The world, my friend, miſtakes men of quick mental faculties, with the advantage of a good memory, and perhaps adorned with the Cheſterfield graces, for men of good ſenſe, men who can twiſt and twirl their ſentiments and opinions as occaſion requires to all points of the compaſs. Such gentlemen very often, mounted on the hobby of ſelf-ſufficiency, brave all danger; and pretending, with the wiſdom of children, to drive to a hair through rocks and precipices, it can be no wonder that they ſhould more frequently fall a victim to their folly than people of ſolid underſtanding and good ſenſe, who chooſes to walk on ſafe ground. There is nothing more common than to ſee men of quick apprehenſion and liberal education the greateſt fools imaginable. They are like children entruſted with ſharp weapons, which endanger themſelves and every child who comes near them; at the ſame

time, as the infant has not ſtrength to hurt a perſon arrived at the years of diſcretion, neither is it in the power of theſe accompliſhed fools to hurt a perſon of common ſenſe, far leſs one of good principles or remarkable for wiſdom. When a quickneſs of diſcernment, liberal education, and wiſdom, are joined in one perſon, they form a complete character; and you'll obſerve a wiſe man never piques himſelf on what he poſſeſſes, whether genius, learning, riches, or all of them united; but applies himſelf to conſider by what means he is to render them more and more uſeful to ſociety: and ſo far as he ſucceeds in this laudable purſuit, he enjoys, in the preſent life, the effects of his wiſdom; and for every diſappointment through miſtake, or through the folly and ingratitude of others, he reſts ſecure in the approbation of his Creator, who knows the ſpring and motive of all his actions. He knows,

that the wiſeſt and beſt laid ſchemes are often fruſtrated for reaſons that we are not permitted to know; he therefore bears his diſappointments as one who believes in a future ſtate, and who humbly hopes, by the rectitude of his intentions, to make himſelf acceptable to his Maſter. If his mind is ever ſtaggered with doubts, he conſiders them as the natural defect of limited knowledge; and as no doubts can ever affect his moral rectitude, or leſſen his hopes of eternal happineſs, he goes through all the gradations, youth, manhood, and age, with a ſteady determination to act according to the dictates of reaſon. At the ſame time, being neither ſelf-ſufficient nor preſumptuous, his prayers are, or ſecret wiſhes of his heart, that God may guide, protect, and aid him in every good purpoſe. Such a man as I here deſcribe, I am not of the opinion will be ſo far left to himſelf as to become a ſlave to his paſſions, far leſs

be

be permitted to commit any flagrant crime; at the ſame time, as we cannot penetrate into the ways of God, nor judge poſitively with reſpect to the different propenſities which aſſail the heart of man; as we do not know to what we can aſſign the groſs abſurdities of mankind, nor reconcile the contradiction of character which are often blended in the ſame perſon; as we do not know whether the fever in the blood, which affects people ſo many different ways, does not often impell them to act contrary to conviction; as we do not know whether to aſcribe the faults or failings, the vices or crimes, of any individual to a defect in the underſtanding, or madneſs in the brain, or to what other evil to aſſign them—it is therefore our duty to judge charitably; and inſtead of inveighing againſt them with ill-nature, think of them with pity and compaſſion.

But although we are not to pretend to

judge critically from what cauſe our neighbour's bad conduct proceeds, yet as we know, that a perſon who enjoys an uninterrupted ſtate of good health may undoubtedly have a thouſand ſources of pleaſure which a poor creature in the agony of pain and ſickneſs cannot enjoy, or even a perſon whoſe conſtitution varies with the weather; ſo we may alſo aſſure ourſelves, that a perſon who enjoys a ſound judgment, who eſtabliſhes in his mind a proper principle of action, who hopes for happineſs in a ſtate of futurity, muſt have ten thouſand ſources of pleaſure which a poor infatuate mortal cannot enjoy, who feels the preſſure of guilt, or a man who even goes zig-zag from right to wrong; who ſins and repents, repents and ſins, till the frame of his mind turns round like a weather-cock.

It is very certain, that we often ſee people in great bodily diſtreſs, who we have

have no reaſon to think has brought it on themſelves by either folly or ſin; we ſee many born with bodily defects, which therefore cannot in any degree be attributed to themſelves; we ſee perſons who are born idiots: is it not therefore natural for us to ſuppoſe, that the abſurdity which we ſee daily committed may alſo ariſe, as I before obſerved, from defects in the conſtruction of the brain, of which we cannot be judges? It is our Creator alone who knows our infirmities of body and mind, what we bring upon ourſelves, and what he ordains as a trial of our charity for one another; what he means to exerciſe our mercy and compaſſion; and what is meant to prevent mankind from aſſuming more knowledge with regard to the intricacy of providence than he has thought fit to reveal.

The viſible beauty and order of the creation, which lies open to our obſervation,

tion, is not less wonderful than those mi
racles recorded in holy writ. To th
first, all must admire and pay an implici
belief; nor can the wisdom of man o
therwise account for them than proceed
ing from the direction of a Suprem
Power, whose ways are past our findin
out. The miracles recorded have differ
ent effects on the minds of mankind, ac
cording to their temper and disposition
Some people, if you tell them a story
and assure them it comes from undoubt
ed authority, they will fix it in thei
minds so firmly, that were they to hea
the same tale varied and explained
hundred different ways by authority
which they would have considered equal
ly undoubted had they heard it first; th
impression remains so strong, that scarce
ly ocular demonstration could make ther
alter their opinion. People of this com
plexion are your stanch believers, wh
imagine by faith alone they are to be sa
ved

ved: they are entirely void of charity with regard to opinions, and make no ſcruple to condemn every body to everlaſting puniſhment who do not think as they do. Theſe ſtrict adherents to faith think morality of ſo little importance, that if any of their clergy were to preach a ſermon on the ſubject, they would be very near leaving the church. There are another ſet of people who believe whatever they hear laſt. This ſet have a great fund of curioſity; they employ their time in a thouſand enquiries, which ſerve only to perplex them; they are at one time Preſbyterians, at another Methodiſts, Independants, Anabaptiſts, &c.; they are continually on the ſtretch for new light, and their minds are always open to conviction. Theſe good ſort of people give themſelves ſo much unneceſſary trouble about what they ſhould think, that one would imagine they have no time to put any moral duty in practice. The third

and

and laſt claſs are thoſe who cannot pa
an implicit belief to things which are
bove their comprehenſion; and as the
do not think that belief is any farther n
ceſſary than as an incitement to virtu
or that the difference of tenets can be
any conſequence in the main deſign
framing our minds to that love of harm
ny which is to fit us for immortality, the
reſt themſelves perfectly ſatisfied in ob
ſerving ſuch rites and ceremonies as a
conſidered ſacred in that religion in whic
they have been educated. They conſ
der every religious duty with reverenc
Although their faith is not quite ſo ſtron
with reſpect to particular tenets as you
bigots in religion, they conſider it unn
ceſſary to rack their brain on points
liable to diſpute, on points which appea
to their reaſon of ſo little importance t
the main end of their exiſtence, viz.
cheerful and ready ſubmiſſion to divin
Providence, and an active obedience i

promoting

romoting, as far as lies in their power, e happineſs of their fellow-creatures; ith a humble hope that God will not y to their account any error in thought hich they have not ſufficient power to rrect. This claſs, which appears to y weak judgment to be by far the moſt tional, and of which conſequently I onfeſs myſelf an humble member, are eat promoters of every ſociable and in-ocent amuſement, as tending to health body and mind. They alſo wiſh to romote every improvement which can nder mankind more and more uſeful nd agreeable to one another. They ave no objection to any faſhion which outhful fancy can invent, providing they re directed by modeſty and ſuperintend-d by œconomy. Believe me, my young riend, a fine gentleman or lady has more oom to diſplay their taſte in elegant ſim-plicity than in the moſt expenſive attire. A beautiful young woman, fancifully

dreſt

dreſt and ornamented with flowers, wi
not look leſs beautiful than if ornament
with the moſt coſtly jewels of the eaſ
nor will the ravages of time be leſs o
ſerved in the old matron or maid, whe
bending under a load of jewels, than
a well-choſen garb proportionally fine
their circumſtances can allow. The m
thod the King of Sweden takes to pr
ſerve a degree of œconomy is worthy
imitation. By his Majeſty's deſire, I a
informed the dreſſes at court are always
plain uniform, to prevent his ſubjec
from falling into extravagance by vyin
with one another. If ſome ſuch plan
œconomy were adopted in England,
am perſuaded it would be a public bene
fit. The rich and opulent might ſoo
pay the national debt without diſtreſſin
the induſtrious by taxes, and in tim
would increaſe their own riches. Thoſ
who delight in being in the extreme o
the faſhion, and who are impelled to ru
i

in debt to gratify this raging propenſity, would away with their plums of extravagance, and diſplay their fancy in beautiful ſimplicity. By taſting the ſweets of œconomy, they probably would acquire a preſervative of pleaſure ſo excellent, and thus become rational and uſeful citizens of the world.

I have often thought, if, inſtead of public faſts, which are occaſionally proclaimed to be obſerved through his Majeſty's dominions, and which in general are ſo irreligiouſly obſerved, there were œconomical faſts, or, I ſhould rather ſay, entertainments, to be recommended throughout the kingdom for one, two, or three months, as occaſion would require, they perhaps would be better obſerved, and of more public utility. When the phyſician does not find one medicine anſwer in bodily complaints, he tries another. I wonder the phyſicians of ſouls

do not vary their preſcriptions in healing the diſeaſes of the mind. The Roman Catholics, who have their fiſh-days, and who keep lent a great deal more ſtrictly than the church of England, finds their account in it, I believe, a great deal more in a moral than a religious ſenſe. It can never be imagined that our Creator can be better pleaſed with his creatures for abſtaining from one kind of food more than another, but as a preſervative of health; and in conſequence invigorating the powers of the mind, and fitting us for ſuch rational occupation and ſtudy as God and nature has intended. I have drawn this epiſtle to ſo great a length, that I muſt defer anſwering your obſervation with reſpect to my throwing a reflection on the memory of Lord Cheſterfield, whom you ſeem to conſider as having been my patron. For the preſent I bid you adieu.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

ACCORDING to my promiſe, I ſhall endeavour to convince you, that whatever proof I may have given of my folly or preſumption in pretending to criticiſe on the writings of Lord Cheſterfield, you have no reaſon to tax me with ingratitude: Yet before I diſcuſs this point, I think it will not be amiſs to give the public, through my correſpondence with you, an abridgment of the riſe and progreſs of thoſe ſanguine expectations as an author, which alternately raiſed and depreſſed my ſpirits for the courſe of a number of years. If it ſerves no other end, it may perhaps prevent female authors from forming too high expectations of ſuch productions as they or their partial

friends may approve, or even from what they have reaſon to ſuppoſe the unbiaſſed ſentiments of the literate. It indeed may not be unentertaining to learn with what ſimplicity I was led on from time to time in endeavouring to intereſt the public in favour of my unfortunate productions: unfortunate only in proportion to theſe hopes inſpired by a keen and warm imagination, and ſupported by opinions which might have elevated a mind much better acquainted than an ignoramus like me, with the tantalizing circumſtances which delude poor mortals, eſpecially thoſe who commence authors. Having no buſineſs on my hand which could be either beneficial to myſelf or others, my chief amuſement in my early years was the reading of plays and novels from a circulating library. Having finiſhed the peruſal of a new novel, which I conſidered more than commonly ſtupid, I could not help expreſſing my ſurpriſe to

two young friends who were at work by me, how a bookſeller could purchaſe ſuch nonſenſe, and commit it to print. What anſwer was given to the obſervation, I cannot pretend to ſay; but I remember we agreed in thinking, that as the circulating libraries were obliged every year to publiſh ſomething new, they were under a neceſſity to purchaſe ſuch as came in their way. I am perſuaded, ſaid I, were I to attempt it, I could write a better novel than this (I've been reading) myſelf. Both my companions joined in wiſhing I would. We diverted ourſelves a little with the conceit, without being in the leaſt degree ſerious. However, I was no ſooner left alone, than I ſat down and wrote the firſt letter in Clarinda Cathcart. I had no ſooner read it to my two friends than they expreſſed the higheſt approbation, and ſeemed perfectly convinced that I was qualified for a novel-writer. Elated with their praiſe,

I liſtened with pleaſure. Before I proceed with this work, ſaid I, I ſhould be glad to be informed what is generally given for a novel of two volumes; for as they are all the ſame price in the catalogue, there muſt certainly be a ſtated price given by the bookſellers according to the volumes, and not according to their merit. Equally ignorant as myſelf with reſpect to this point, one of my friends propoſed enquiring at N—le's circulating library, and to bring me intelligence directly. Accordingly away ſhe hied, I believe with all the pleaſure which a good mind generally feels in being any way concerned in promoting the intereſt of their neighbour; while I ſat big with expectation to hear the ſum, the vaſt ſum! which was to be the price offered for my productions, at the ſame time not without a degree of fear of not being able to complete the work, having no ſettled plan in my head which I could work upon.

upon. On my fair meſſenger's return, ſhe informed me, that ſhe had ſeen Mr N—le himſelf; who had informed her, that the price given for novels was more or leſs according to their merit; but that if the lady would ſend him a ſpecimen of the work, he perhaps could be able to judge pretty nearly what ſhe might expect, and whether or not he would himſelf become the purchaſer. Far from being diſcouraged by this information, my companion was again diſpatched with the ſpecimen already mentioned. On her return (her eyes ſparkling with pleaſure), ſhe told me, that Mr N—le was highly delighted, and deſired her to tell the lady, that if ſhe kept up the ſame ſpirit throughout the work, he would give a very genteel price; but could not aſcertain what it would be till he ſaw it fully completed. Now the queſtion was, what could Mr N—le conſider to be a very genteel price to be offered to a lady? for

of

of ſuch my friend was polite enough, by the rules of courteſy, to allow me the title, and not perhaps without a view to enhance the value of the production:—Nothing leſs, to be ſure, than a few hundreds; nay, we concluded with all the poſitive preſumption of ignorance, that a novel of two volumes, although ever ſo inſignificant, if thought fit to be printed, could never bring leſs than a hundred guineas. As I had often heard female wits and authors ſpoke of with a degree of contempt, I took the promiſe of my two confidents not to mention a word of my intention; for although I conſidered it a laudable ambition, the endeavouring to be uſeful either to myſelf or others, I had not reſolution to commence author in the face of the world, under the diſadvantageous idea of pretending to be wiſer than my neighbours, conſequently more fooliſh. This point being ſettled, there was no time to be loſt.

Down

Down I ſat to my pen; and in three months finiſhed the hiſtory of Clarinda Cathcart and Fanny Renton.

It is impoſſible, my young friend, to expreſs, during theſe three months, how much I was delighted. Every incident ſprang rapidly from my pen; and I became ſo enamoured with the children of my imagination, ſo intereſted in whatever befel them, that I uſed to cry or laugh as if the perſons or ſcenes had been realized before me: nor did I ever know one day, or even one hour, what the next was to produce. No mother was ever happier at the birth of her firſt born, nor preſaged finer things, than I did of this excellent production. Elevated with hope, my confident was now diſpatched with the manuſcript complete; and a day was appointed her by Mr N——le to return for an anſwer. During this ſtate of ſuſpence, with regard to the exact value

which

which was to be put on this invaluabl
performance, imagination was fully em
ployed in forming œconomical, yet li
beral, plans, with reſpect to time, money
with all the delightful effects whic
youthful fancy could repreſent as the con
ſequences of riches; riches attained by
ſtanding forth an advocate for virtue. De
lightful occupation! As I had begun an
finiſhed Clarinda, my firſt performanc
in three months, I concluded that
ſhould with all the eaſe imaginable writ
four in the year; and as it never onc
entered my imagination there would b
any more difficulty in diſpoſing of then
than there would be in the produce of
landed eſtate, and having laid it down a
a certainty that a hundred guineas mu
be the price of the worſt, it was no won
der, charmed as I was with my delight
ful production, that I ſhould conſider my
ſelf a perſon of no ſmall conſequence.

In

In the midſt of a thouſand agreeable ideas, a circumſtance occurred to my mind which a little diſturbed my dreams of happineſs, viz. what people would conjecture on ſeeing me live in a ſtyle ſo far above my preſent circumſtances. Here ſcandal would have ſufficient ſcope to ſhoot her envenomed arrows, to blaſt a reputation which neither conſcious innocence nor the utmoſt circumſpection could protect. Whether I combated this point with a reſolution to brave the firſt danger by appearing as an author, I do not really recollect. The time approached which was to aſcertain the value of my eſtate. Whether the clouds were more than commonly heavy that morning, or whether there was any other preſage of misfortune, I cannot pretend to ſay; my mind was too agreeably engaged to obſerve. But, oh! time can never eraze the impreſſion, nor memory forget the woful countenance, of the ſympathiſing maid,

when

when ſhe entered the parlour and ſtoo
before me. Had ſhe been commiſſione
to pronounce ſentence of death, or th
ruin of the child of my hope; in a word
had ſhe dropt the manuſcript, ſhe coul
not have looked more aghaſt. With
voice ſcarce articulate, ſhe pronounced—
five guineas!

My dear friend, if ever your hope
are raiſed by the ſmiles of a noble o
great man; if ever you are tranſported
by the kind looks of the woman you a-
dore; if ever your imagination clings t
honours in proſpect for yourſelf, or the
child of your heart, think on the autho
of Clarinda, and prepare for diſappoint-
ment. Here was fair hope blaſted in a
moment. Hope, you'll perhaps ſay,
ſown in ignorance, and blown up by pre-
ſumption. True, my friend. I have no
doubt but your hopes may appear to be
raiſed on a more ſolid foundation; yet ſtill it

will not be amiſs to arm yourſelf with fortitude. Great things may often be compared to ſmall; and remember, a well-poiſed mind is always neceſſary to weather the blaſts of fortune.

PETRIFIED with aſtoniſhment, I ſtood motionleſs for a few ſeconds. When, endeavouring to recover myſelf, in a faint and low key I repeated—*five guineas!* Silence again enſued a few minutes; when, rouſing myſelf from this lethargic diſtreſs, with becoming ſpirit I raiſed my voice, and with a proper emphaſis, which would not have diſgraced a tragedian princeſs, I repeated *five guineas!* I'd rather commit it to the flames. If either of my confidents had had the wiſdom of honeſt Sancho Pancho, they would have argued ſtrongly againſt wrecking vengeance on the innocent cauſe of my ſufferings, on the beloved child of my imagination; who, for three months, had

enlivened me with hope, and cheriſhed me for ſo long a time with the delightful view of proſperity: But almoſt equally diſappointed with myſelf, they had neither advice nor conſolation to offer. But fortunately for the world, and for this child in diſgrace, I had it not in my power to commit ſuch a raſh and daring act of cruelty. My fair offspring was ſtill in the hands of this cheapener of merit, this degrader of worth! What! what, ſaid I, was the reaſon he gave for offering the diſgraceful ſum? Indeed, my dear miſs M—, returned my fair friend, I am aſhamed to tell you. He ſaid, it would coſt him a great deal of trouble before he could make it fit for the public, there being ſcarce four lines in which there is not an error in grammar. Good heavens! exclaimed I, where was theſe errors when he read the ſpecimen? He ſays, notwithſtanding the errors, he likes the performance, otherwiſe he would not offer to purchaſe it. He has a

great many volumes by him which he got ſent him from ladies in a preſent; a number of which he would not be at the expence of printing. He likewiſe, continued ſhe, told me, that Mrs C—r is a very pretty writer of novels, and ſhe has ſold him ſeveral manuſcripts at two guineas a volume: ſo that his offering five guineas for a firſt performance is a very great price. He ſays he often loſes by his purchaſes; but deſired me to tell the lady, that if her novel ſhould have a more than ordinary quick ſale, he would afterwards make her a preſent. A preſent indeed! Traverſing the room in ſhame and diſappointment, a ſudden thought occurred to my relief, viz. there were more bookſellers in London than Mr N—le. There are more bookſellers, Miſs B— (ſaid I) in London than Mr N—le. Very true, replied my two friends, revived by the obſervation; there are a great many more in London, and capital bookſellers. Theſe

circulating libraries, I imagine, generally buy nothing but trash. Make yourself easy, my dear Miss M——, said Miss B—, I'll go immediately and get the manuscript from Mr N—le, and take it to an eminent bookseller who lives in the Strand; a man of great property, who I am persuaded will not offer a trifle for a novel of two volumes such as your's. No sooner said than agreed on; and away she tripped on the important errand. But, O fair Hope! how deceitful do you generally prove to the most sanguine of your votaries! The distressed damsel returned with a countenance which at once in some degree spoke the purport of her tale, viz. that not one of the booksellers, for she had tried several, would so much as look at the title-page; they never purchased the productions of ladies, and advised her to carry it to Mr N—le, or to some other circulating library.

HAD I, during Miſs B—'s abſence, mounted as high on the hill of Expectation as when my ambaſſadreſs went firſt to diſpoſe of the ineſtimable treaſure, a ſecond blow, before I had recovered the firſt, might probably have deprived the world of the author of Clarinda, and murdered at once a genius in embryo: But fate had determined it otherwiſe. With a proper degree of ſpirit, and perhaps not without ſome ſmall ſhare of reſentment, I had made a feeble effort to mount up to my former lofty ſituation: It would not do. I had therefore wiſely made a retreat into the harbour of Reſignation, where, placed in that calm and conſolitary bower, I received this laſt intelligence with only a ſigh of remembrance. There is no help for it (ſaid I), I am not the firſt that has met with a diſappointment; would to God I were the laſt. It was a prayer which even excluded not Mr N—le. Several days paſſed before I had reſolution

to draw near the entry of my retreat. Recovering, however, by degrees, and feeling a reviving ſpirit of animation attended by Humility, I, on hearing a gentle tap, cautiouſly opened the door, and admitted two viſiters, Patience and Perſeverance, each of whom gave in a claim to my attention; a claim which I acknowledged as their due, and promiſed, as far as a weak conſtitution would permit, to follow their inſtructions. I the more readily agreed, as at any time, when too much fatigued, I could return to my retreat; where Patience, with a ſmile of complacency, promiſed to attend me. Nor has ſhe ever failed, although on many different occaſions I have puſhed her away, declaring I would not admit her again in my preſence. But this amiable friend, far from reſenting ſuch ill uſage, never fails to court the friendſhip of the diſtreſſed. She generally retires a little till I am calm, then redoubles her zeal in my

my ſervice, bringing Hope along with her to enſure her ſucceſs.

One day lately as they entered, what ſaid I is the reaſon, my dear and tried friend Patience, that you will bring along with you that giddy deceiver, who has ſo often been the cauſe of my ill uſage to you? Take her away I beſeech you, and return by yourſelf; I will then endeavour to make you amends: morning, noon, and night, I will ſpend with you; but never again truſt to the deluding promiſes of a common cheat. Hope, ſmiling aſſent, went out; while I, pale and dejected, ſtood trembling. Patience looking ſorrow, rebuked me for diſmiſſing my beſt friend; aſſuring me I would paſs my time very heavily with her, if Hope was baniſhed. She was ſorry I did not ſeem to underſtand nor pay a proper regard to her merit. It is true, continued Patience, that Hope generally diverts

diverts herſelf with the folly of youth; ſometimes indulging, but more frequently diſappointing, thoſe ſanguine expectations which either ſpring from ſelf-ſufficiency or a vain dependence on the ſons and daughters of men: yet be aſſured, if you walk in Wiſdom's path, you muſt have Hope to attend you. Indeed I confeſs, continued ſhe, it is impoſſible for me to ſtay long where Hope is not admitted. The gravity of my appearance, contraſted with the gaiety of Hope, has led you to imagine we are unconnected; but be aſſured we are inſeperable friends; and without the cheering rays of her countenance I could not exiſt. Good Heav'ns! exclaimed I, if I'm left by you I'm miſerable. Hope, who had gone no further than the door, overhearing the exclamation, inſtantaneouſly appeared; and taking my hand with inimitable grace, vowed that ſhe loved me beyond expreſſion. A glow of pleaſure ran through my whole

whole frame. Agreeable deceiver, ſaid I, neither age nor experience, I find, are proof againſt your flattery. Continue to attend me accompanied by Patience till my lateſt hour; ſoften my pillow in the hour of death; fulfil thy promiſes with reſpect to another world; and, ſupported by Patience, I'll forgive all your deceptions in this. Hope, with a more ſerious aſpect than uſual, aſſured me, that without a divine commiſſion they had no power to attend on ſuch awful occaſions. But, reſumed Patience, endeavour by a cheerful ſubmiſſion to Divine Providence to obtain the favour of Heaven; then in all probability we ſhall not (if we would) be allowed to forſake you. Struck with the obſervation, my thoughts aſcended to Heaven. I fervently prayed. Then again deſcending to earth, I ſoon after planned this Series of Letters. Hope, with her uſual gaiety, whiſpered in my ear, this laſt effort will more than anſwer

your

your wiſhes. The good-natured public ſorry at having ſo often baffled your honeſt endeavours, will join your particular friends, and make you full amends for their former neglect. Chanting out the chorus of a humorous ſong,—Now or never, now or never; your time is, your time is, your time is now or never: then taking my hand, and ſmiling in my face aſked if I believed her? No: to your promiſes with reſpect to this world I am a mere ſceptic; yet cheered by your gaiety, and ſince without you I cannot have Patience, Experience has taught me to know my intereſt better than altogether to diſcard you. Smiling at my ſincerity, and the ſerious expreſſion of my features, ſhe aſked, if, by ſuch a compliment, I thought I could enſure the conſtancy or friendſhip of the ſons and daughters of men? It is a pity, ſaid I, I cannot.

But this, you'll obſerve, is a long de-
reſſion, and appears like a dream. Yes,
y friend, it is a waking dream of the i-
agination, where thought, or in other
ords the ſoul, is engaged by ten thou-
nd ideas, which crowd ſo faſt, that few,
n compariſon, my limited underſtanding
able to arange. In my next I ſhall
eturn to where I admitted the viſit of
atience and Perſeverance: for the pre-
nt adieu.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

BEING fully compoſed by Patience, reſolved to follow the advice of Pe ſeverence; and Humility having wroug a wonderful effect on my underſtandin I began to think coolly on Mr N—l offer of five guineas. Five guineas, my former exaltation of mind, appear a great deal leſs than nothing; now appeared in its true and genuine wort neither more nor leſs than five guine In a word, by the advice of Prudenc (who paid me an occaſional viſit), N N—le became the proprietor of my fi production, with this ſtipulation, that t errors ſhould, under my inſpection, corrected by Mr A—n, a gentleman wh aſſure

aſſured me that Mr N—le had looked at them through a multiplying glaſs. Another ſtipulation, which I had almoſt forgot, although I made a few guineas of it, viz. that I was to have as many copies of it as I chooſed at the under price at which they are ſold to brothers in trade; and from this, you'll obſerve, in my humiliating circumſtances, I reſolved to own myſelf the author of Clarinda, in expectation of my friends purchaſing copies from me, on which I was to have a ſmall profit. All theſe matters being ſettled, a new and elevated thought flaſhed at once on my imagination, viz. the dedicating my fair offspring to the Queen. No ſooner did this bright thought ſtrike on my mind, than a ſudden glow of reanimating heat fixed the idea; and Hope, who was at this time in diſgrace, failed not to catch ſo fair an opportunity of renewing offers of friendſhip with all the ſeeming zeal of a ſincere friend, who ſuſ-

pected Ambition to be my reigning paſſion. She repreſented to my fancy every delightful object of ambition that could flatter or draw the attention of a mind ſuſceptible of pleaſure. The favour of a QUEEN! Protect me Heav'n!

Charmed with the delightful idea, the queſtion was now how ſhe was to be properly preſented? a prodigious deal depending on the dignity of the perſon who was to have this honour. General G—, of all others, appeared to be the moſt eligible perſon, not only on account of the merited favour he ſtood in with her Majeſty, but alſo from my brother having the honour of being a lieutenant in the Queen's Royal Regiment of Highlanders, commanded by the General; a circumſtance which was enough for one of my ſanguine temper to believe the favour would the more readily be granted. I ſhould certainly have immediately written

ten to the General on the ſubject, had not a more eaſy method occurred, viz. the applying to Colonel M—, to whom I had the honour of being related, and who I knew by experience was always ready to ſerve any of his friends who applied for his intereſt: I therefore immediately wrote to the Colonel, begging his intereſt with General G——; and at the ſame time ſent him a copy of the manuſcript for his peruſal. The Colonel, who was at that time confined with the gout, had leiſure, and took patience to read it; and accordingly in a day or two ſent me word in his laconic ſtyle, that he thought the ſtory good, although he did not pretend to have any ſkill in novels; however, he ſhould ſpeak to General G—— about it when he ſaw him. This did not altogether anſwer my expectation, or the idea I had of the importance of the introduction; yet being urged by Patience,

and under the inſpiration of Hope, I ſpent the interim very agreeably.

In leſs than a week I had a card from the colonel, acquainting me, that general G—— had granted my requeſt, and would preſent Clarinda to her Majeſty whenever I pleaſed. Elated beyond meaſure, I could no longer conceal from my parents in Scotland the road I had got into preferment. I had concealed from them my writing the manuſcript, reſolving to aſtoniſh them at once with an account of my riches: but having failed in my former expectations, and having now reſolved to appear openly as an author, I directly wrote them an account of my whole proceedings. My mother, who had a great ſhare of common ſenſe and a good heart, was not much given to reading, nor do I believe at that time had ever heard of a female author in her life. On reading my letter

ſhe

ſhe burſt into tears, concluding I had loſt my ſenſes. My father, brother, and ſiſter, had the greateſt difficulty in the world to compoſe her; aſſuring her there was not a ſingle word in the epiſtle which in the leaſt indicated inſanity. A lady coming in was immediately ſhown the letter; and ſhe corroborating a circumſtance which my brother and ſiſter had in vain endeavoured to make my mother believe, viz. that there was nothing more common in England than ladies writing novels, and that my good luck in having general G—— to preſent mine would in all probability make my fortune, my mother, who was not quite ſo ready to mount in the air as if ſhe had been thirty or forty years younger, was barely ſatisfied; comforting herſelf, that if I had not loſt my ſenſes, ſhe was certain there would be nothing bad in the book. By the return of the poſt, I received letters from

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my brother and ſiſter, informing me of all theſe particulars, and at the ſame time congratulating me on having got general G—— for my friend, and expreſſing their impatience to ſee my production, which they doubted not would do me honour. I had juſt read theſe letters when I was preſented with a card from colonel M—, informing me that general G——, on conſideration, was of the opinion that a novel was not a work of conſequence enough for him to preſent to her Majeſtty, and that it would be much better to have it preſented by a lady. Had the general ſent an order to commit me to the tower for high treaſon, I do not believe I could have been more confounded, or have felt more agonizing diſtreſs. My former diſappointment was confined to myſelf and two ſympathiſing maidens, who knew the diſappointment at the ſame inſtant I did: but now there were my parents, whom I loved with the

moſt

moſt dutiful affection, a dearly-beloved brother and ſiſter, at near four hundred miles diſtance; all of whom were in anxious expectation of good news; my brother and ſiſter moſt probably exulting in my good fortune, and propagating the intelligence to no more than they knew. The diſtreſs which I imagined my parents would experience on being informed of the affront (for I conſidered it nothing leſs), and my being thought by many as having propagated a falſehood altogether, was to me as heavy an affliction as could have befallen me. And here I would beg leave to recommend to every perſon of rank and diſtinction, who would not wiſh to give pain to the human heart, to weigh well the propriety of what they promiſe, eſpecially to the unexperienced; for however trifling it may appear to them their acting contrary, I make no doubt but there are thouſands on ſuch occaſions who ſuffer equally as I did. I dare

dare anſwer for it, general G—— imagined it a matter of mere indifference whether Clarinda was preſented or not; and at beſt knew it would be a thing of no great conſequence to my intereſt; nor could he ever imagine that I could be ſo very ambitious of a feather in my cap: but ſo it was, and evils are only evils as we conſider them. My head ached, my pulſe beat ſo ſtrong, that had I ſent for one of the ſons of Eſculapius, I ſhould probably have been blooded, bliſtered, and confined to my bed for a month. Some of my readers, not ſo good-natured as the reſt, will probably ſay I deſerved it: and indeed I ſhall not pretend to diſpute the point with them. My fever continued the whole night, and my eyes never ſhut to ſleep. However, in the morning, Nature (who if allowed would perform more ſurpriſing cures than this), procured me at laſt a refreſhing ſleep; and when I awaked, I found myſelf in

ſome

ſome degree fit for endeavouring to find out ſome way to extricate myſelf out of this unexpected dilemma; a thing which, in my agony of diſtreſs, appeared perfectly impracticable; and even at that moment ſeemed only barely poſſible. The poſſibility, however, for one in my deſperate ſituation, was ſufficient for me to make the attempt. General G—— had ſaid, that a lady could with more propriety preſent Clarinda to the Queen than he could. Why, then, ſaid I to myſelf, and perhaps to my two confidents; why then did he not propoſe it to one of the ladies at court? Could the general ſuppoſe that I had any intereſt with the ladies of the bed-chamber or the maids of honour? ſurely not. No matter, I am determined. On what are you determined? ſaid one of my friends. To write, returned I, to the Dutcheſs of Northumberland, and ſimply inform her Grace of my diſappointment. It can at leaſt

leaſt do no harm. Will you, my dear friend, addreſſing myſelf to Miſs E——; will you do me the favour to deliver my letter to the Dutcheſs's maid, and by your eloquence endeavour to get her to deliver it directly? You have as yet taken no active part in this affair; will you do this to oblige me? With all my heart, returned ſhe; at the ſame time it is very improbable it will have the deſired effect.

INDEED it was natural to ſuppoſe that the Dutcheſs of Northumberland's maid would conſider herſelf a perſon of ſuch conſequence, as to make it equally difficult to obtain the favour of her ear as that of the Dutcheſs's: nor could it be ſuppoſed but, by a perſon perfectly ignorant of the world, that the firſt attendant of the Dutcheſs of Northumberland, one of the greateſt women in England, who vied with majeſty in all the elegance of

ſtate,

ſtate, that her maid would admit a young girl without knowing from whence ſhe came, or what was her buſineſs; or on knowing her requeſt, that ſhe, without a handſome preſent, or ſo much as a ſolicitation from any perſon with whom ſhe was acquainted, or had ever heard of, ſhould deliver to her grace a letter with a novel to be preſented to the Queen. And, ſecondly, if ſuch a thing could have been ſuppoſed, was the Dutcheſs of Northumberland, without any recommendation from the Literati, without conferring a favour on any perſon of rank and diſtinction, or on any one whatever except the author herſelf; who, for what her Grace knew, might be, and in fact was, one of the moſt inconſiderable authors that ever put pen to paper? Surely not. But liſten, all ye who imagine being difficult of acceſs adds to your dignity, who ſuppoſe it neceſſary to awe your inferiors into a proper diſtance; obſerve

ſerve the condeſcenſion, the eaſe, the good-nature, of the Dutcheſs of Northumberland, the repreſentative of the great Earl of Percy; a Dutcheſs in her own right, and firſt Lady of the Bedchamber: obſerve the influence of example on her attendant, and which moſt probably like electricity had an effect on the moſt inſignificant member of the family. On my fair meſſenger's return, inſtead of bringing a denial or equivocal anſwer; inſtead of appearing before me with a face of ſympathiſing ſorrow, or with a gleam of hope endeavouring to cover deſpair; ſhe ſtood before me the meſſenger of joy. It is done, ſaid ſhe; there is no time to delay, Clarinda is to be preſented to-morrow; Mr N—le muſt be ſent to immediately to get a copy properly bound fit for preſenting.

In my diſtreſs of mind, it had not occurred to me that it was neceſſary to dreſs the

the outſide of my volumes, conſequently had ſent them to the Dutcheſs without any ceremony ſtiched in blue paper (I now ſaw the impropriety). Equally ſuſceptable of pleaſure and pain, I was quite tranſported with joy. Tell me, tell me, ſaid I, the particulars. But not one word would my ambaſſadreſs communicate till orders were ſent to Mr N—le to equip Clarinda in all the elegance of taſte proper for appearing in the preſence of her Majeſty. She then deliberately related the following particulars.

On enquiry for the Dutcheſs's maid —Why not a maid of honour? A Dutcheſs's principal attendant ought to be ſtyled a maid of honour, eſpecially a maid ſuch as the Dutcheſs of Northumberland's, who needed no bribe to do a good-natured-action, and who had no difficulty, nor pretended any, on ſo important a buſineſs as delivering a letter to her Grace with two volumes, to be preſented to the Queen.

Whether ſhe is now maid or matron, a woman of honour I inſiſt ſhe muſt be. Pardon the digreſſion.—On enquiring for the Dutcheſs's maid, ſhe was immediately conducted to her preſence; where, after telling her ſimple errand, this maid of honour, with all the condeſcenſion, with all that eaſe and affability inherent in a dignified mind, took the letter and the books, went away, and in a few minutes returned to enquire if the author had a copy bound fit for preſenting. On being anſwered in the negative, begged that ſhe would get one directly, as her Grace was to be with her Majeſty next day, and would preſent the novel with a great deal of pleaſure: that the Dutcheſs had not only read the letter, but alſo the addreſs to the Queen: that her Grace had kept the copy ſent (for herſelf); and adding, that the Dutcheſs would be extremely happy if ſhe could be of any further ſervice to the author.

No

No words can expreſs the pleaſure experienced on this recital. But to be brief, Clarinda being properly equipped, next day had the honour of being introduced by the late Dutcheſs of Northumberland, and kiſſing her Majeſty's hand at St James's. The day following, as is cuſtomary on ſuch occaſions, I had the exquiſite pleaſure of reading in the news papers the following paragraph: Yeſterday was preſented to her Majeſty, the Hiſtory of Clarinda Cathcart and Fanny Renton, by her Grace the Dutcheſs of Northumberland, and was moſt graciouſly received.

Delighted beyond expreſſion, I ſat down immediately to my pen to communicate to my parents, &c. the important intelligence. I cut out of the news paper the above paragraph, and carefully wrapping it up, ſent it encloſed; not doubting but my friends would be equal-

ly delighted with myſelf on ſeeing in print the honour conferred on Clarinda. You may alſo believe, that being ſtrongly impreſſed with the goodneſs of the Dutcheſs of Northumberland, my pen did not fail in doing her Grace, as alſo her maid of honour, all manner of juſtice. But I am ſorry to ſay, I believe my pen was rather ſevere againſt one of the beſt of men, general G——, for the affront he had put upon my production. Every thing being now in ſo fair a train, Hope did not fail to fill my head again with a thouſand delightful chimeras. But ſeveral weeks having paſſed without any notice being taken of the author of Clarinda, my ſpirits began to droop, and I began to chide my fair friend, when, one evening coming home in rather a deſponding humour, I found a card waiting me from colonel M——; the purport of which was to acquaint me, that the Queen had ſent me by general G—— a

preſent

preſent of ten guineas, which the general had given him to deliver, and which he would accordingly give me if I would breakfaſt with him next morning. Ten guineas! a preſent from the Queen! Gracious heaven! exclaimed I, 'tis impoſſible! the colonel has made a miſtake. Ten guineas from the Queen of England! in my exalted idea of Majeſty, appeared altogether incredible. Whether I ſlept any that night or not has really eſcaped my memory; but early next morning my confidant and I ſet out for the colonel, where he ſoon confirmed the intelligence of his card by delivering me the ten pieces. Mortified beyond expreſſion, I remained ſilent while the colonel expatiated on the amiable character of the Queen till breakfaſt was over, when my confidant and I took our leave as diſconſolate as if we had loſt a fortune. As I walked along, every carriage as it drove and puſhed me aſide, ſeemed to ſay,

what a poor inſignificant are you! But indeed the ſituation of my mind is eaſier to imagine than deſcribe. However, not long after I got home, reaſon, fortitude, patience, and a number of other virtues, paid me a viſit, to counteract the effects of pride, ambition, diſappointment, and all the little malevolent paſſions which deſtroy the human heart, unleſs timely relieved by the above phyſicians of the mind; who, unlike the ſons of men, pay more attention to the poor than the rich. Pride had inſiſted that the Queen had affronted me moſt egregiouſly. Had her Majeſty, continued Pride, ſent you a diamond pin of that value, it would have been ſome gratification to have ſhown it occaſionally as a preſent from the Queen of England. Such a gem in the poſſeſſion of poſterity, would have been of more value than the moſt invaluable curioſity in the cabinets of the Virtuoſi. Such a gem, a hundred years hence, might

might have intitled your great grand-children to have looked above meaner mortals, who could not boaſt of any of their anceſtors having obtained royal favour: but ten guineas from a Queen appears ſo like a charitable donation to a poor creature, who had neither money, credit, nor friends to give her a dinner, that, continued Pride, her Majeſty has certainly injured you beyond reparation. Ambition lay cruſhed under the weight of Diſappointment, and Hope durſt not venture to ſhow her face.

Reason having ſtood ſilent till Pride had almoſt overpowered me, ſtepped forward; and taking me by the hand, aſſured me that no perſon, unconſcious of guilt, had cauſe to ſink under the preſſure of diſappointment; that a ſound mind, although it might be ſometimes hurt, would always riſe ſuperior to thoſe evils which ſprung from the faults or errors

rors of others. That I ſhould ill deſerve the favour of majeſty, if I could not, upon a ſuppoſed ſlight, behave with proper reſolution: that upon due conſideration, I would find, that from my addreſs to the Queen, which in all probability was the only part of my publication which her Majeſty had peruſed, there was no cauſe to imagine, placed as I had owned myſelf, at a humble diſtance from the great world, that I ſhould think myſelf affronted by a preſent of ten guineas: that if their Majeſties were to beſtow royal favour in the ſtyle which folly firſt ſuggeſted, I had a right to expect not all the revenue would ſatisfy the authors who would annually addreſs their works to one or other of the royal family. And pray, proceeded Reaſon, what is there in your production ſuperior to others, that could make you ſuppoſe that you merited the favour of Majeſty? I did not think, returned I, that my performance, comparatively

comparatively ſpeaking, is equal to many others; but I imagined, as I was the firſt female who had dedicated a work to her Majeſty, calculated to improve the ſentiments of youth, I thought—I was aſhamed to proceed; but leaning my head on my hand, I might have ſat for the picture of Dejection. How do you know, ſaid Reaſon, that you are the firſt? but grant that you are; her Majeſty certainly acted very properly; for had your expectations been anſwered, 'tis probable you would never have taken the trouble to have wrote another. What, returned I, if the Queen had given me a diamond pin?

PRUDENCE, giving me a ſlap on the ſhoulder which made me ſtagger, deſired me to pocket the affront; ſaying, ten guineas was to me better than a diamond of twenty times the value, unleſs I turned it into money. Be adviſed by Reaſon, continued the angry maiden; pluck up your

ſpirits, and be thankful that her Majeſty condeſcended to honour you with the ſlighteſt notice. It is very eaſy, ſaid I (almoſt crying), to adviſe; and although I may be ſenſible of the truth of all that has been ſaid, I cannot help my feelings. You might have ſpared your admonitions, Mrs Prudence, continued I fretfully; and when you cannot give comfort, you had better be ſilent. Patience ſtepped forward to endeavour to calm me; and Hope, peeping over her ſhoulder, ſaid, the ten guineas was meant as an earneſt of the Queen's future favour; that I was now inliſted in her Majeſty's ſervice; was therefore aſtoniſhed at my dejection. Never was poor mortal ſo influenced by a fair viſionary. Not all the admonitions of reaſon and prudence had the ſmalleſt effect to raiſe my ſpirits till this gay deceiver appeared. Reaſon, ſmiling at the change in my countenance, ſaid, ſhe was far from diſapproving of my admitting

the

the viſits of Hope; only begged that I would not pay ſuch an implicit regard to her promiſes, as to influence my conduct either with reſpect to my conſcience or purſe. Peace being again reſtored to my breaſt, I was reſolved to plan ſomething new in conſequence of being inliſted in her Majeſty's ſervice, when I received intelligence of the death of a much-beloved ſiſter, formerly mentioned in theſe letters. At this ſtroke, Ambition, Pride, and all the paſſions which, though under ſubjection, had not left me, now totally diſappeared, except Grief, which reigned alone. My parents, who were deeply afflicted, demanded my preſence directly. I heſitated not, but haſtened with all imaginable ſpeed to mingle my ſorrow with theirs, and at the ſame time if poſſible by my preſence to adminiſter comfort.

HERE it would be needleſs to dwell on ſcenes

ſcenes of melancholy too common to mak
any impreſſion on minds at eaſe, and un
neceſſary to thoſe acquainted with grief
Time only could mitigate our ſorrows
and rational reflection teach us ſubmiſ
ſion. Soon after my only brother, whom
I have ſince loſt, ſetting out for the Eaſt
Indies, was a new cauſe of ſorrow. My
father, rendered incapable of buſineſs by
a paralytic diſorder, of which he died
two years after, and my mother drooping
under theſe afflictions, altogether conſpi-
red to undermine my conſtitution; and
notwithſtanding every effort on my part,
brought on a hyſterical and nervous com-
plaint, vulgarly believed to be only ima-
ginary evils of a fine lady, but in reality
was at this time the unwelcome attend-
ant of a poor author: at the ſame time,
having intervals of tolerable health, I was
adviſed by two of my moſt zealous friends
to write another novel, and publiſh it by
by ſubſcription. Reaſon and Prudence
ſtrongly

ſtrongly ſeconded the propoſal; and Humility, who had been my conſtant companion, for ſome time prevented my making any objections. I accordingly wrote the Hiſtory of Alicia Montague; of which, after defraying every expence, I cleared about a hundred guineas. This would have been ſufficient to have made me go on, had it not been the great difficulty which I underſtood there had been in procuring ſubſcriptions. My zealous friends were confined to a few; and they, I had reaſon to believe, were exceedingly diſappointed to find that not one in twenty were diſpoſed to throw away a crown on what they could get a reading of when publiſhed for a few pence. Many were the witticiſms and ſarcaſms thrown out on the occaſion; few of which, comparatively ſpeaking, reached my ears. However, I then imagined there was ſufficient to damp my courage from attempting again to write by ſub-

ſcenes of melancholy too common to make any impreſſion on minds at eaſe, and unneceſſary to thoſe acquainted with grief. Time only could mitigate our ſorrows, and rational reflection teach us ſubmiſſion. Soon after my only brother, whom I have ſince loſt, ſetting out for the Eaſt Indies, was a new cauſe of ſorrow. My father, rendered incapable of buſineſs by a paralytic diſorder, of which he died two years after, and my mother drooping under theſe afflictions, altogether conſpired to undermine my conſtitution; and notwithſtanding every effort on my part, brought on a hyſterical and nervous complaint, vulgarly believed to be only imaginary evils of a fine lady, but in reality was at this time the unwelcome attendant of a poor author: at the ſame time, having intervals of tolerable health, I was adviſed by two of my moſt zealous friends to write another novel, and publiſh it by by ſubſcription. Reaſon and Prudence ſtrongly

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ſcription: and although I had ſeen a third edition of Clarinda advertiſed, having never heard again from Mr N—le, I had no inducement to write again for ſale to a bookſeller. Hope, who, unleſs under a divine commiſſion, like the ſons and daughters of men, is of too gay a diſpoſition to ſtay long in the company of thoſe who cannot contribute to her pleaſure; yet being conſcious of having made ſo many profeſſions, was aſhamed altogether to forſake me, eſpecially as Patience continued my friend. As my ſpirits were now calm and ſerene, ſhe got leave to come or go without my taking any notice of the change of her behaviour. Indeed her viſits reſembled, as near as you can imagine, that of a mere mortal to a friend in adverſity. However, in one of her flying viſits, ſhe put me in mind of my being in the ſervice of the Queen, and that I was bound to dedicate Alicia to her Majeſty. Accordingly Alicia, as

Clarinda

Clarinda, was addreſſed to the Queen; but whether ſhe ever was preſented or not, I am very uncertain, I was informed ſhe was by her Grace the Dutcheſs of Ancaſter; but as I never again had the honour of hearing from her Majeſty, I was led to ſuſpect that I had been deceived. However, as Hope did not think me worth inſpiring, I felt very little diſappointment. If the hundred guineas did not afford me that elevated pleaſure which Hope had formerly promiſed as the reward of my purſuit, it gave me at leaſt a kind of placid ſatisfaction in being able to contribute to the comfort of thoſe whoſe happineſs I had always fully more in view than my own. Hope obſerving a change in my countenance, began to think me again a fit object of amuſement. Accordingly ſhe came on a viſit; and making a thouſand profeſſions of eſteem, propoſed my writing a comedy. I liſtened with ſo little emotion of pleaſure, that

I believe ſhe almoſt deſpaired of making me again a dupe to her promiſes. However, I thought there could be no harm in the attempt: and accordingly with all humility began, and concluded the Comedy of Sir Harry Gaylove, or a Comedy in Embryo; the fate of which you was too young to remember. And as many of the readers of this publication may have forgot, and others never heard of, I ſhall take the liberty at the end of this volume to tranſcribe the preface which was publiſhed to the Comedy by ſubſcription, contrary to my former intention. But the well-known and friendly Mr B——, who had not only given his opinion much in favour of the performance, but after my being diſappointed in getting it brought on the London theatres, exerted himſelf, I believe to the utmoſt of his power, to bring it on the ſtage in Edinburgh: and failing in his purpoſe, deſired a gentleman to inform me, (for I had

had not the honour of being acquainted with him myſelf), that he adviſed me ſtrongly to publiſh it by ſubſcription; in which he hoped to ſerve me more ſucceſsfully than he had done hitherto: And indeed he was as good as his word; for in one morning he procured me a hundred ſubſcriptions from the parliament-houſe. Mr Simon Fraſer, now ſheriff at Inverneſs, procured me no leſs than three hundred. Such acts ſhow what can be done by the zeal and activity of thoſe who have warm and benevolent hearts. Their influence, like the ſun, can melt the moſt frozen, and can even draw from the miſer the advance price for a rarity, which a few weeks may be had for the tenth part of the value. Common ſenſe may teach us, that if the gardener does not ſell the firſt fruits of his garden to thoſe who can afford to give him a high price, the profits ariſing afterwards would ill reward his induſtry, or ſtimulate him

to vie with his cotemporaries in improving his garden; how much more does the author require to meet with encouragement in rearing up and bringing forth the fruits of the mind? But the matter is this—Mankind have taken it into their heads, that authors who are worth countenance are thoſe only who write without hopes of reward, whoſe independent ſpirit ſoars above the paltry profits obtained by divinity, law, phyſic, or war. Authors ſhould write by inſpiration and live on air. I confeſs myſelf in this reſpect to have been always ill qualified for an author; my ambition from the firſt being to preſent the public with ſuch fruit as Hope flattered me they would not grudge to pay a price for: at the ſame time, no lawyer was ever more anxious to gain the cauſe of his client; no phyſician to prolong the life of his beſt patient; no clergyman to lead his flock to Heaven; nor general to ſend thouſands

ſands to another world—than I am to pleaſe and improve the minds of my readers. If I have failed, it is no more than many of theſe gentlemen have done before me, who yet have made a fortune as if they had ſucceeded in every attempt; while I — (I bluſh at my own inſignificance), had I had the hearty goodwill of every ſubſcriber, ſhould have had ſome ſatisfaction: But, alas! I have reaſon to believe, for one volunteer I have had twenty preſſed, or at leaſt overperſuaded, into my ſervice. And here, with all the dignity of injured honour, with all the ſpirit of my country, and with all the indifference which an individual ought to have for ſelf, I ſincerely hope that no young lady may have ſubſcribed that is not as willing as ſhe would be to purchaſe the moſt beautiful feather in her headdreſs: That no beau may have ſubſcribed that does not as cheerfully as he would for the eſſence of jeſſamy for his hair:

hair: No matron, who prefers what ſhe does not underſtand to common ſenſe: No lawyer, no phyſician, that does not ſubſcribe with the ſame indifference as they pocket a fee: No man of the ſword, that cannot with more pleaſure read theſe epiſtles than kill an enemy: No clergyman, who ſets up faith againſt works: No rake, no ſelf-ſufficient ſcholar, who deſpiſes the chaſte or ſimple productions of a female author: No perſon whatſoever, that does not conſider me as a ſiſter and fellow-traveller; who having taken rather an uncommon path in her journey through life, requires, when drawing near the evening of her days a little reanimating heat from the ſmiles of Fortune: In a word, no perſon that does not only ſubſcribe cheerfully, but with the hearty zeal of benevolent minds; ſincerely wiſhing that Hope may no longer deceive me. To all ſuch I look up with pleaſure, and receive their favours with gratitude.

To

To clear myſelf of ingratitude to Lord Cheſterfield—In the firſt place, my friend, you are miſtaken in ſuppoſing his Lordſhip had been my patron. As a nobleman, whoſe taſte, and literary merit was well known, I, by the advice of my beſt friend Dr B——, ſent the comedy of Sir Harry Gaylove for his Lordſhip's peruſal, as alſo a copy to Lord Lyttleton, whoſe opinions I not only ſolicited, but alſo their intereſt, in caſe they thought it fit for the ſtage. Indeed I had then reaſon to believe, that without the intereſt of ſuch reſpectable characters in high life, there was little probability (whatever merit the play might have) of its being repreſented. I ſhall at the end of this volume give the public a copy of the letter which his Lordſhip honoured me with in return to my requeſt, as alſo the contents of three letters which I had the honour to receive from Lord Lyttleton; two of them on ſending his Lordſhip the comedy, the other

other in conſequence of a periodical paper which, during the ſuſpence I was in with reſpect to the play, I went to London to publiſh, and in which I had the aſſiſtance of ſeveral gentlemen whoſe literary merit are well known. From a grateful ſenſe of the Dutcheſs of Northumberland's goodneſs, I ſent her Grace the introductory paper in manuſcript, begging the favour of being allowed the honour of dedicating the work to her Grace: and next day I was waited on by a gentleman, probably one of her ſuite; who informed me, that her Grace not only accepted of the dedication, and would moſt cheerfully patronize the work, but would alſo furniſh me with ſome anecdotes which might be uſeful in the publication: but whether this gentleman, diſpleaſed with my *je-ne-ſais-quoi*, or diſguſted at my Scot's accent, had prejudiced her Grace againſt me; or whether my not waiting on the Dutch-

eſs

eſs to receive the anecdotes, I cannot pretend to ſay: but I never had the good fortune to hear from my patroneſs again; the memory of whoſe amiable diſpoſition notwithſtanding I ſhall always revere. I very often, in the courſe of my diſappointments, imputed them to want of reſolution to wait on the parties I wiſhed to ſolicit. Indeed I never could diveſt myſelf of a certain timid fooliſh appearance in the preſence of thoſe on whom I on any degree depended. The only time I ever waited on one of my pretended patrons was in conſequence of a card I received from Mr Foote, deſiring to ſee me at his houſe to conſult with me about the alterations which he thought neceſſary to be made in the comedy before its repreſentation. I am perſuaded Mr F— the Advocate, who ſaw me there accompanied with a lady I took along with me, can never forget the timid, dependent, figure I made in the preſence of this great

great theatrical genius; who expreſſed, with all the zeal of diſintereſted friendſhip how happy it made him to have it in his power to tranſplant my northern production to the warm and nouriſhing climate of old England, where nothing ſhould be wanting on his part to bring it to perfection.

ALTHOUGH every generous ſentiment was expreſſed with all the grace that could adorn inſincerity, and make it paſs for genuine truth; yet they had no effect ſo as to make me expreſs my gratitude, or even to indicate the ſmalleſt pleaſure, while awed by the preſence of this comic hero. Indeed I have often wondered that he did not in ſome of his pieces take off the Scots female, whoſe inanimate figure had frozen the generous ſentiments of an Engliſhman as ſoon as they were expreſſed: but I was too little known for that purpoſe; or perhaps had

he ſhown his diſreſpect ſo openly to a twig of Scots merit, though otherwiſe not worth obſervation, it might have raiſed the ſpirit of ſome northern champion to have laid the pride of this hero in aſhes.

BEFORE I conclude, allow me to obſerve, that although the Earl of Cheſterfield's influence in the eve of his days had been equally powerful as in the days of his youth when the favourite of the graces; although in conſequence of this he had been my patron, the ſucceſsful patron of my productions; I ſhould not have thought I acted improperly in writing againſt his Lordſhip's maxims when I ſaw them publiſhed to the world. If, my young friend, you were to be ſo unfortunate as to fall into a habit of vice, I ſhould certainly think it both unneceſſary and cruel to expoſe you, or add to that puniſhment which you would ſoon-

er or later experience (unleſs timely left oft) to be the inevitable conſequence of your procedure. If my ſecret admonitions with you could not prevail, I would probably mourn in ſecret, and be ſilent: But were you ſo infatuated as ſeriouſly to repreſent your follies and vices as the neceſſary appendages of good-breeding, the glorious privileges of high life; or that falſehood and inſincerity in ſome degree are conducive to the general happineſs of mankind; were ſuch ſentiments of yours to be publiſhed to the world, either in your lifetime or after your deceaſe; I ſhould make no ſcruple of exerting my weak endeavours to expoſe ſuch doctrine as it would deſerve.

I muſt likewiſe obſerve, if Lord Cheſterfield wrote in favour of the Comedy in Embryo contrary to his opinion, it is impoſſible to conſider it an obligation; if his Lordſhip wrote his real ſentiments,

I cannot help obſerving, that that very letter with which I was honoured is a memento of the inſignificance of ſuch admiration as is purchaſed by the graces. Were truth and ſincerity the characteriſtic of mankind, there would be no neceſſity for a good and a great man to leave the world, or be left by it, twenty years before he breaths his laſt. Although deaf and blind, while he kept his ſenſes, he would continue the patron of merit: although age and infirmity prevented his public appearance, his influence would remain ſtrong as his judgment. In the full poſſeſſion of his mental faculties, the wiſe man would become the mentor of youth; and to his laſt, like the good old oak, ſtand king of the foreſt. I have little doubt but the Earl of Cheſterfield, in the number of years in which he had time for ſerious reflection, would ſee things in a very different light than when he wrote to his ſon: and I am per-

ſuaded, if ſouls are permitted to look down on earth, the ſoul of this great Earl may, even on my weak attempt, have looked down with approbation.

THE letters, at the end of the volume, which I take the liberty to tranſcribe, are meant to ſhow, that however fooliſhly ſanguine I was in my expectations when I firſt commenced author, I certainly had ſufficient reaſon to have believed that Sir Harry Gaylove would have been repreſented; and alſo from the approbation of thoſe reſpectable ſtrangers who did me the honour to write theſe letters, I may ſtill flatter myſelf that Hope will not always deceive me. But be this as it may with reſpect to the public, If my letters can be of any ſervice to you, I ſhall not loſe my reward. Adieu.

LET-

[The Author thinks it neceſſary to acquaint her Readers, that the 17th Letter in Vol. I. was written in conſequence of one ſhe received from her young Correſpondent, dated the 30th of September laſt from Neufchatel, Swiſſerland. And as ſhe thinks it will not be unacceptable the giving them a ſpecimen of the young Gentleman's epiſtles, who is now in his ſeventeenth year, ſhe will preſent them with the two following, as alſo her anſwer to the laſt. The reſt of the Letters, although addreſſed to the ſame Gentleman, when ſuppoſed to finiſh his education, ſhe begs leave to obſerve were originally intended for publication; and any thing alluding to her Correſpondent's anſwers are conſequently merely ideal.]

MY DEAREST MOTHER *,

AFTER long expectations of hearing from you, I at laſt ſit down to write you, being determined to gratify your deſire of hearing from me every month.

SINCE I wrote you laſt I have made a

* The young Gentleman gives the Author the appellation of *Mother* from the motherly attention ſhe paid him while under her care.

little party to the iſland of St Pierre, ſituated in the lake of Bienne, and remarkable for the abode of the famed J. J. Rouſſeau after his baniſhment from Geneva. The party conſiſted of a gentleman of Berne, two Germans of Franckfort, two Engliſh gentlemen (that are in the ſame penſion with me), and your humble ſervant. The wind being unfavourable we were obliged to row. The lake of Bienne is joined to that of Neufchatel by the river Thielle; and after three hours hard rowing, of which I gave the beſt hand, we arrived at the famed iſle. After rambling over the iſland, and ſeeing all its beauties, we returned to the houſe to ſee the chamber of Rouſſeau; in which I found the following lines:

C'eſt ici que non ame contemple
L'aſile d'un etre immortel.
Cette maiſon pour mon cœur eſt un temple,
Et cette chambre in eſt l'autel.

As

As you do not know French I give you its literal tranſlation. "My ſoul here contemplates the aſylum of an immortal being. This houſe is a temple for my heart, and this chamber is its altar."

I am now preparing to go to town for the winter, when I ſhall be able to have thoſe maſters that I have occaſion for, not having that opportunity in the country.

The vintage in this part of the country is finiſhed; and I can aſſure you that the making of the wines is not ſo pretty as the hay-making in England. There is very little or no beer in Swiſſerland; therefore we drink wine during our meals.

The lady who was ſo kind as to hear me read French every morning, and of whom I mentioned to you in my laſt, is gone

gone to Berne, her winter reſidence, and has been ſo polite as to give me an invitation to go and ſee her; which if poſſible I ſhall certainly do, as I may make a little tour of Swiſſerland, and ſhall then take Berne in my route, being the firſt, though not the capital, city of this little kingdom.

THE only news here is, that war will be declared between France and England. The Paris gazettes give an account of a number of officers of the French navy and army going to Verſailles, and declaring to the king and council, that ſhould the royal coffers be inſufficient to carry on the war, that they will defray the remaining expences at their own coſt. But all this I believe to be a hum, as it is not every French officer that is even able enough to ſupport himſelf and his family in a gentleman-like manner.

I do not know what is the matter, but I have not had a letter from any of my correſpondents this age. I beg you would write me as often as your time and buſineſs will permit.

GIVE my love to all my friends, relations, and acquaintances. And believe me, &c.

31ſt OCT. 1787.

MY

My dearest Mother,

I Received your obliging letter on the twenty-fifty of laſt month, and would have anſwered it ſooner, but was then preparing to ſet off for Berne, which I did next day, with an intention of ſeeing his Royal Highneſs Prince Edward, fourth ſon of the king of England; but was unfortunate enough to find that his Royl Highneſs would not be there till the 30th inſtant, and would take Neufchatel in his road, where it was expected a ball would be given him. Upon hearing this intelligence, I with my fellow-traveller (a Mr L— of Leads) returned to this place, where we found the Prince, but no ball was given—We, however, waited

waited upon his Royal Highneſs; who told us there was to be a ball at Berne, and hoped to ſee us there. His reaſon for coming to Neufchatel was to ſee a Mrs Couper, formerly governeſs to one of his ſiſters, and a Mr Amezdrot, who was French teacher to his Royal ſire. On the third day of this month I with my old fellow-traveller and another Engliſhman went to Berne on horſeback, and the ſame evening danced at the ball; which, I aſſure you, was the moſt ſplendid and brilliant I ever ſaw; there were three ſetts, which I ſuppoſe made a hundred couple.—An elegant ſupper was alſo given; and on the Wedneſday following there was another ball, which was more in the private manner than the former, for there was no ſupper, nor was it ſo crowded. His Royal Highneſs's politeneſs towards us went ſo far as to invite us to ſupper, which we accepted of.

AFTER giving you an account of the balls at Berne, I think it neceſſary to ſay ſomething of the city and its inhabitants.

BERNE is one, if not the beſt, regulated and cleaneſt city in the world. The pavements of the ſtreets are all under ſuperb arcades. Convicts are condemned to clean the ſtreets; and in the middle of which there is a canal to carry off the filth of the town.

As for the inhabitants, they are politeneſs itſelf: ſo amiable, ſo free, ſo polite, and ſo generous, that I never in all my life met with their equal. The women, ſo charming, ſo handſome, that if I had not left my heart in England I certainly ſhould have loſt it at Berne. This letter I write for November; and in my next for this month I will give again my opinion about the valſes, when I hope you

you will not think I have judged too haſtily. Indeed I wiſh you would publiſh it, or elſe decline adding your laſt to me to your work; ſo that the public in general may not think that I have any antipathy to this country, or too much love of my own.

My compliments and love where due. And believe me, &c.

Neufchatel in Swiſſe,
December 10th, 1787.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

SINCE I wrote you I have received two of yours; both of which gave me great pleaſure. I would have wrote you in return to your firſt, but I underſtood by the contents you had not received mine; ſo I thought I would delay writing till I heard from you again. I was beginning, however, to be a little impatient, and was about to write when the poſt brought me your agreeable epiſtle. By the accounts you give me of the balls, elegant entertainments, and particularly from your invitation from his Royal Highneſs Prince Edward, I find I muſt be in ſome degree miſtaken in ſuppoſing that you will

will not have an opportunity of knowing the politeſs of the country: but I wiſh you had let me know on what pretence you waited on the young Prince. Was it a ceremony obſerved in general by the gentlemen of the place? or how was it?

You may believe it gave me great pleaſure to hear of yout waiting on one of the Royal family; and more particularly your having the honour of being aſked by the Prince to ſupper with a private party. At the ſame time, my friend, I hope neither that honour nor any other which may be conferred upon you, will ever make you leſs agreeably affable either to your inferiors or equals: on the contrary, I hope you ſhall always conſider every inſtance of condeſcenſion from a ſuperior, which inſpires you with grateful reſpect, or makes you feel any uncom-

mon degree of pleaſure, as a leſſon to make you underſtand the power you have in ſome reſpect of conveying the ſame agreeable ſenſation to others, whoſe line of life, inferiority of fortune, or any thing elſe makes them look up to you as their ſuperior. And I flatter myſelf, you will not only conſider this as one of the amiable traits in the character of an accompliſhed gentleman, but alſo as a moral duty to confer ſuch pleaſure; more ſubſtantial favours not being ſo frequently in our power. You beg that my laſt letter to you may not make one in my publication, or elſe that I will do you the favour to publiſh your next, that the public may not think that you have an antipathy to the country in which you preſently reſide, nor too great a partiality for your own. With reſpect to your firſt requeſt, it is not in my power to comply, the epiſtle being already printed;

printed; and as to my publiſhing your next, that muſt depend on the time I receive it, as moſt probably the work will be ready for publication before your letter arrives: but be this as it may, you can receive no diſcredit by the letter being publiſhed, as your name is not mentioned. It is very true, a few individuals, who you or I or ſome other perſon may inform that the letters were all written to my dear ——, will know; but what then? they will never think the leſs of you for my finding fault either with your errors in point of ſtyle or your opinion; a young gentleman of your age not being ſuppoſed to think deeply: your ſeeing your errors when they are pointed out to you, good ſenſe not to be diſpleaſed, and ambition to correct them, will ſoon make you at one view able to diſtinguiſh what is in itſelf trifling, what is deſerving of applauſe, and that vice only is a ſub-

jeſt for diſguſt; and even this only in a general ſenſe, as a vicious perſon ought always to be conſidered in ſome degree as an object of pity rather than hatred. Adeu.

LET-

Copy of a Letter from Lord Cheſterfield to the Author.

MADAM,

YOU do me a great deal too much honour, in ſuppoſing me either a competent judge or an uſeful patron of polite literature. From an inordinate deafneſs, and various infirmities that attend old age, I have been out of the world theſe two and twenty years: I have almoſt forgot it, and am quite forgotten by it.

IF the managers of our two theatres here had had half the pleaſure in reading your Comedy that it gave me, they would gladly

gladly have accepted and acted it: but they are to be conſidered as tradeſmen who deal in plays for profit, and who will purchaſe no goods but ſuch as they think they can retail with advantage; of which they pretend to be, and perhaps are, the beſt judges from long knowledge of the taſte of the public; which taſte is of late years ſo vitiated, that muſical nonſenſe triumphs over dramatic ſenſe. Whatever fate may attend your Comedy, you may juſtly have the ſatisfaction of knowing, that the dialogue, the ſentiment, and the moral of it, do honour to a young and virgin muſe.

I am with the greateſt eſteem, Madam, your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

July 16. 1770.

CHESTERFIELD.

Copy

Copy of a Letter from Lord Lyttleton to the Author.

MADAM,

I SHOULD not have delayed ſo long to return you my thanks for the honour you have done me in letting me ſee your Play, if it had come to my hands as ſoon as the letter which informed me that I ſhould be favoured with it from you; but I did not receive it till end of laſt week.

As you deſire me to give you my judgment upon it, I can very ſincerely tell you, that I think the plot intereſting, the characters ſtrongly marked, and the dialogue lively and witty, though not without

out faults. But experience has ſhown me, that to judge what will do for the ſtage, and ſucceed well in the acting, Mr Garrick's opinion is far ſuperior to mine: nor can I take on myſelf to recommend any play to him or Mr Coleman, even if it were written by the beſt friend I have. Pardon me therefore, Madam, for referring you to them, and particularly to Mr Garrick; from whoſe deciſions in theſe matters there can, I think, be no appeal. If I myſelf were to write a play, I would leave it entirely to his determination whether it ſhould be brought on the ſtage or not. Permit me to aſſure you of my very grateful ſenſe of the favourable opinion you do me the honour to expreſs of me, and of the high eſteem and regard with which I am, Madam, your moſt obedient humble ſervant.

Hagley, Sept. 20. 1770.

LYTTLETON.

From

From Lord Lyttleton to the Author.

MADAM,

I Was at your door this morning, to expreſs my concern at a letter I wrote you on the 30th of January in anſwer to yours, and which ſhould have come to you by the Penny Poſt. Having miſcarried, the contents of it were to tell you, that I have not the leaſt acquaintance with Mr Foote. I cannot think of talking to him on the ſubject you mentioned, but take the liberty to adviſe you, as the beſt part for your ſervice, to leave him perfectly maſter of your play; with this caution alone, that he ſhall put nothing into it which it would be unbecoming

your ſex to write: and to ſecure the performance of that neceſſary ſtipulation, let you ſee the alterations he propoſes to make before he brings it on. I have only to add, that I am ſorry for the uneaſineſs you have ſuffered by the unlucky miſcarriage of my anſwer to your letter; that I heartily wiſh you ſucceſs; and that I am with the higheſt eſteem, Madam, your moſt obedient humble ſervant.

Feb. 3. 1771.

LYTTLETON.

From

From Lord Lyttleton to the Author, in return to a Letter wherein ſhe aſks his Lordſhip's advice, whether ſhe ſhould continue the publication of the periodical paper before mentioned, the ſale not anſwering her expectations; and at the ſame time as ſhe had been told that theſe publications ſeldom anſwered at firſt, ſhe was unwilling to drop it, yet afraid to go on without farther advice?

MADAM,

ON conſidering the queſtion you do me the honour to put to me, my anſwer is this: If you write for fame, go on; if for money, deſiſt, unleſs the Dutcheſs of Northumberland or Lord Cheſterfield

ſterfield will enable you to bear the expence of continuing the paper till it becomes ſo well known as to ſupport itſelf. This they ſurely could do without any inconvenience to their opulent fortunes: and this I would do, if I were in their circumſtances with great pleaſure.

INSTEAD of ſending you this letter, I would have waited upon you; but ſome indiſpoſition confines me at home this morning; and to-morrow I am engaged to go out of town. I am, with ſincere admiration of your talents and ſentiments, Madam, your moſt obedient and moſt humble ſervant.

LYTTLETON.

Hill-ſtreet, Jan. 13. 1771.

Copy of a Letter from Gen. Oughton to Mr Diggs, who at that time was manager of the Edinburgh Theatre. The letter was ſent to the Author open, and was ſuppoſed by the General would be delivered by her to Mr Diggs along with the Comedy.

SIR,

THE Lady who waits upon you with this will at the ſame time preſent you with a Comedy of her writing, which ſhe wiſhes to have brought on the ſtage. As it is the firſt national production of the kind, and the author is pretty univerſally known and eſteemed, I am perſuaded that your taking her virgin

muſe under your patronage will be highly pleaſing to the Public: and by ſhowing your diſpoſition to oblige the people of this country, be a means of their cheerfully contributing to the emoluments of the theatre during the winter. Nor need you fear that the chaſtity of the piece, and the moral ſentiments with which it abounds, will diſguſt a Scots audience, the vices of the South not having taken deep root in this country. Among the number of thoſe who will be obliged to you for your compliance, you will be pleaſed to count, Sir, your moſt obedient humble ſervant.

JA. ADOL. OUGHTON.

Copy

Copy of a Letter publiſhed in the Newspapers in conſequence of an Addreſs which the Author had publiſhed in the papers ſome time before. It appears to be from a Gentleman to his Friend, who had enquired particularly on ſeeing the Addreſs, and ſeems to be a zealous friend to the Author.

DEAR SIR,

YOU aſk me by what author, and for what play, the addreſs which you lately ſaw in the papers was deſigned to engage the public attention. I am heartily pleaſed that I am ſo well qualified to gratify all your demands.

THE young Lady who writes the Play has already given the public the moſt ample proofs of her talents for writing in two novels; the one intitled CLARINDA CATHCART, the other ALICIA MONTAGUE. As in performances of this kind, characters, manners, paſſions, and actions, ought to be delineated with fidelity, ſtrength, and delicacy, the talents of a dramatic author are in ſome degree abſolutely neceſſary to the ſucceſsful accompliſhment of a novel: But though the pieces I have now mentioned are ſurpriſing emanations of genius, and riſe far above moſt of the compoſitions of this kind in every excellence of which they are capable, yet from the author of theſe I ſhould not have expected the dramatic performance now offered to the public. It is intitled the Comedy in Embryo, from a project of writing a comedy formed by one of its chief characters; which his ſucceſs in the courſe of the real play ſu-

ſuperſedes. The plan is intereſting and probable, the characters natural and ſtriking, the dialogue proper, eaſy, and ſprightly, but varied by the pathetic, the witty, or the ſimple, as the diverſity of character and incidents demand. The cataſtrophe, though ſuch as might very naturally happen, cannot fail to move every ſuſceptible heart; and the *denouement* or agreeable revolution by which the characters are brought to that ſituation in which we find them ſo probable, that the world muſt approve them without heſitation, yet ſo ſurpriſing, that it is almoſt impoſſible to anticipate them till they are diſcovered in the advancement of the fable. In the printed addreſs, you have a ſhort detail of the various and unlucky viciſſitudes, by which this piece has from time to time been intercepted in its way to action. I have heard it is now preſented to Mr Diggs with a warm and polite letter from a perſon

ſon of diſtinction, taſte, and literature; and that diſtinguiſhed actor has, I am perſuaded, too much taſte not to ſee that this performance merits a much better reception from fortune than it has hitherto found.

In a word, never had Scotland a fairer opportunity of encouraging a native production, nor of diſcovering how far ſhe will exert herſelf in doing juſtice to ſuch efforts of taſte and genius, as have every claim to her maternal patronage and protection. I am, dear Sir, with ſincere eſteem and reſpect yours,

PHILONASSUS.

PRE-

PREFACE to the Comedy of Sir HARRY GAYLOVE.

IN this PREFACE, the author takes the opportunity of returning her thankful acknowledgment to the Subſcribers for this COMEDY; and, more particularly, to thoſe who have generouſly intereſted themſelves in raiſing the ſubſcription.

A PLAY which had met with the applauſe of the Public, or even, with a tolerable reception, might have been aſſured of patronage when deſigned for the preſs; but, to be ſupported in the humiliating ſituation

ſituation of this Comedy is what ſhe had no reaſon to expect:—As ſhe cannot therefore attempt to expreſs her high ſenſe of the obligation, ſhe will, as briefly as poſſible, give her reaſons for writing and publiſhing a Work, which, from its preſent appearance (viewing it in the moſt favourable light) muſt at beſt ſeem as unfit for the ſtage.

The favourable reception the Public gave to her two novels, and the more than common notice taken of them by the Reviewers, fired her ambition, and led her to wiſh to merit their approbation in a work more generally eſteemed, and from which, if ſhe proved tolerably ſucceſsful, ſhe might, in ſome degree, derive both profit and fame.—Yet, doubtful of her ability, ſhe executed her plan with the utmoſt diffidence, reſolving, if it met not with the approbation of a few friends, whoſe taſte and candour ſhe thought ſhe might

might depend on, to bury it forever in oblivion: But on the contrary, being elated with the ſentiments they expreſſed in its favour, and unacquainted with the myſteries of the ſtage, ſhe ſimply ſent it to Mr Garrick, without any recommendation: Mr Garrick, without reading the play, ſaid he had more new ones in his hand than he could poſſibly bring on the ſtage for a number of years.—It was then carried to Mr Dagg, counſellor at law, and one of the patentees for Covent-Garden Theatre: Mr Dagg promiſed to peruſe it with attention, to ſhow it to the managers, and to give a poſitive anſwer, whether they could accept of it or not, in ten or twelve days at fartheſt.—Accordingly, upon being waited on a ſecond time, Mr Dagg deſired that the author might be acquainted, that her play was highly approved of; that it was cheerfully accepted by the managers, who, in all probability, would bring it on the ſtage

in

in a few weeks; but, if not, he thought he might venture to aſſure her it would be the firſt new play repreſented the winter following.

THE beginning of the following winter, Mr Dagg being again ſpoke to, deſired that the author might be informed, that the death of Mr Powel, and the management going into other hands, it was neceſſary for her to apply to Mr Coleman, without whoſe conſent her play could not be repreſented.—To be brief, Mr Coleman, unfortunately for her, happened to differ in his ſentiments with his predeceſſors; and gave it as his opinion, that though the play had merit, the plot was not enough intereſting for the ſtage. She then deſiring her play might be returned, wrote to Mr Garrick, acquainting him of every particular; and begged he would take the trouble to read the comedy, and let her have his opinion.—The laconic

laconic anſwer of Mr Garrick was to this purpoſe: Mr Garrick's compliments to the author, and that his ſentiments were entirely the ſame with Mr Coleman. Baffled in her expectations, for which ſhe hopes the public will think ſhe had ſome reaſon, ſhe began to ſuſpect, that, without the approbation and intereſt of ſome high perſonages of diſtinguiſhed taſte, her applications would be in vain; ſhe therefore, in conſequence of the advice of a few of her well-wiſhers, ſent the comedy to the Earl of Cheſterfield and Lord Lyttleton, with whoſe opinion of the piece ſhe will take the liberty to conclude this preface; but as their Lordſhips, at the ſame time they gave their opinion, acquainted the author of their having no intereſt with any of the managers of the ſtage, and as ſhe could not ſuppoſe that Mr Garrick or Mr Coleman would chuſe to give up their own opinion in favour of their Lordſhips, and bring it to a trial

unſolicited, ſhe thought it needleſs to give them any further trouble.

She then ſent the comedy to Mr Foote, who was then manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, with a copy of what the Earl of Cheſterfield and Lord Lyttleton had done her the honour to write in its favour.—Mr Foote, after peruſing the play, frankly accepted the performance, and poſitively promiſed to exhibit it that ſeaſon, and during the whole winter occaſionally repeated his promiſe, till about to go away; when being wrote to by a friend of the author, he returned for anſwer, that his reaſon for not repreſenting the comedy was, that he wanted ſome alterations made, which he ſuppoſed could not be then done, the author not being on the ſpot; but, if agreeable to her, he would poſitively exhibit it in the Hay-market the enſuing ſeaſon,

ſon, where it would be much more for her advantage.

The author, ſome weeks after this, waited on Mr Foote in London, to know the alterations required; and being afraid that Mr Foote might not be pleaſed with her manner of making them, ſhe begged the favour he would take that trouble on himſelf; expreſſing at the ſame time her hopes, that he would put nothing in the comedy unbecoming one of her ſex to write. Mr Foote, with all the complaiſance and ſeeming generoſity imaginable, promiſed, ſince ſhe had given him that liberty, that he would cheerfully make the alterations: that he would exhibit it in the month of July: and aſſured the author, he would take the ſame care of her intereſt as he would of his own. He added to this purpoſe, that the comedy pleaſed himſelf; which, if it had not, he would not have paid regard to the re-

commendation of any Lord in Britain; and that he believed he knew what would meet with a favourable reception from the public as well as any man in England.

WHAT reaſon Mr Foote had for not performing a promiſe ſo voluntary, and ſo poſitively made, the author cannot pretend to ſay; for although ſhe wrote him ſeveral letters after the time that he was to have repreſented her comedy, ſhe received no anſwer, nor could ſhe ever get the manuſcript out of his hands.—She pretends not to make any comments, but will keep ſtrictly to facts both for and againſt the merit of the performance.—She then, almoſt in deſpair, and thinking it a duty incumbent on her to try every poſſible method to ſucceed, ventured to addreſs in the newſpapers the public and Mr Digges, preſent manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, giving them a brief account

account of her diſappointments with regard to the play. And here ſhe likeways failed, Mr Digges giving it as his opinion, that the comedy is ſomewhat deficient in both plot and character; and that ſeveral of his friends, who are perſons of known genius and taſte, think him not erroneous in his determination, in reckoning it not ſuch a piece as he could get up for the entertainment of an Edinburgh audience.

HAVING therefore fooled away ſo much time in uſeleſs ſolicitation, her hopes alternately raiſed and depreſſed, ſhe at laſt reluctantly came to the determination of publiſhing it by ſubſcription.

THE giving the hiſtory of her diſappointments, may, by many, be thought unneceſſary: What ſhe principally means by it, is to prove what perhaps might be doubted by ſome, *viz.* That ſhe ever had

had any reaſon to believe it would be repreſented; and ſhe even flatters herſelf, that, from the conduct of thoſe who are allowed to be the ſole judges of what is proper or improper to appear on the ſtage, it may ſtill be thought doubtful, whether it would have ſucceeded or not; it not being always the caſe, that the plays they do bring on either deſerve or meet with the approbation of the public. —But, allowing that they may be right in rejecting this comedy, the author humbly hopes that the public will at leaſt not altogether think it unworthy of the preſs.—She begs leave to own her ſenſe of the obligation ſhe has to thoſe who took the trouble to write criticiſms on the comedy when it firſt appeared in manuſcript: Had ſhe had any encouragement ever to have wrote another, ſhe is perſuaded, ſhe would have profited much by their judicious remarks; but as the play was then accepted by the managers

of

of Covent-Garden Theatre, and as ſhe underſtands it has met with ſome ſevere critics ſince, who will not allow it the leaſt merit, a certain degree of pride, which, ſhe hopes will be thought allowable, made her reſolve to ſend it into the world in its native ſimplicity, unadorned with either preſented or borrowed ornaments.

Lord Cheſterfield writes:

If the managers of our two Theatres here had had half the pleaſure in reading your comedy that it gave me, they would gladly have accepted and acted it. Whatever fate may attend your comedy, you may juſtly have the ſatisfaction of knowing that the dialogue, the ſentiments, and the moral of it, do honour to a virgin muſe.

Lord Lyttleton writes thus:

As you deſire me to give you my judgment

judgment of your comedy, I can very ſincerely tell you, that I think the plot intereſting, the characters ſtrongly marked, and the dialogue lively and witty, though not without faults.

BRITISH 27 SP 94 MUSEUM

FINIS.